Selections

Collected Works of Mahatma Jotirao Phule Vol. II

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

Barrister P. G. Patil

1. Son of a Primary School teacher at Kavlapur (Dist. Sangli). Lovingly nurtured and educated by Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil through his 'Rayat Shikshan Sanstha', Satara.

2. The recipient of the prestigious Hughlings Prize in English (Inter Arts 1942) and Ellis Scholarship in English (B. A. 1945) of the Bombay University. He is one of the eight recipients of both these Prizes in the 134-year history of the University of Bombay.

3. Studied at Willingdon College, Sangli, Fergusson College, Poona, King's College, London, and Lincoln's Inn, London.

4. Was incarcerated at Yeravda Central Prison, Poona, in 1942-43 during the 'Quit India' Movement.

5. Vice-Chancellor of Shivaji University, Kolhapur, (1975-78).

6. Member of the Maharashtra Public Service Commission, Bombay (1979-83).

7. Published 'Karmaveeropanishad'— a book of reminiscences of Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil (in Marathi).

8. Just completed a Two-Volume biography of Karmaveer Bhaurao (in English).

9. Translated 'Selections from the Collected Works of Mahatma Phule'— (Vol. II).

Vol-I (Slavery) was published on 28-11-91.

COLLECTED WORKS OF

MAHATMA JOTIRAO PHULE

VOL. II

SELECTIONS

Collected Works of Mahatma Jotirao Phule

Vol. II

SELECTIONS

Translated by

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सत्यमेव जयते

Education Department, Government of Maharashtra
Mantralaya, Bombay 400 032
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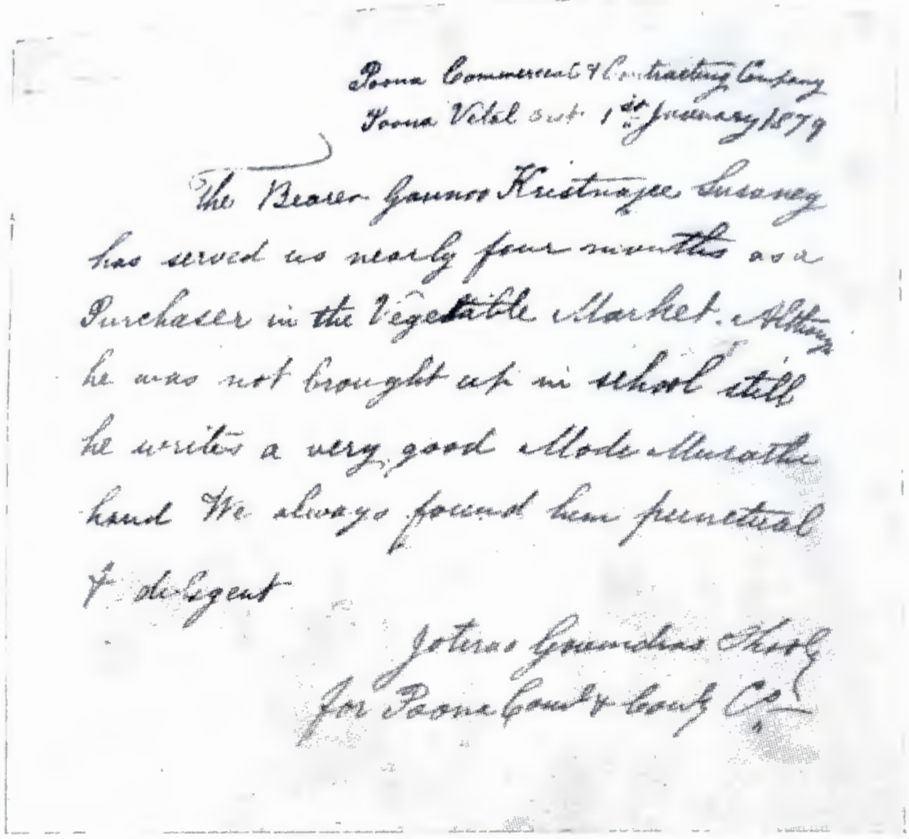
MAHATMA JOTIRAO PHULE



Poona Commercial & Contracting Company
Poona Vetal out 1st January 1879

The Bearer Gannoo Krishnajee Lusaney has served us nearly four months as a Purchaser in the Vegetable Market. Although he was not brought up in school still he writes a very good Modi Murathe hand We always found him punctual & diligent

Joturao Govindrao Phule
for Poona Comm & Contg Co.

Mahatma Phule's Handwriting

Mahatma Phule's Residence

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" The Universal Religion of Man is founded on Truth and Ethics, and everything else is unethical," *says Joti.*

The opening lines of the Cultivator's Whip-cord are justly famous. " For want of education, intellect was lost; for want of intellect, morality was lost..... etc. "

The range of his interests was vast, his intellect was gargantuan, and the sweep of his sympathy and concern was truly universal. We shall be justified in probing the historical and sociological reasons regarding the emergence of such a social activist and revolutionary in Maharashtra.

I do sincerely hope and pray that the younger generation of Maharashtra will study these ' Selections ' reverently and will try their best to reflect and translate those noble seminal ideas into their personel lives. As W. H. Longfellow said :

" Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime—"

They should " read, learn, mark and inwardly digest " these winged words. The light shed by this ' Eternal Flame ' will continue to illumine our paths in years to come, will cheer and sustain us in our onward march in an otherwise benighted landscape, and will even afford us a fleeting glimpse of the ' Promised Land ' in the not too distant future.

I have great pleasure in commending these ' Selections ' to the discerning people of Maharashtra in particular and of India in general.

SHARAD PAWAR
(Defence Minister
Government of India).

New Delhi:
18th December, 1991.

COMMITMENT FULFILLED

On the recommendation of the State Committee for celebrating the Centenary of the Death Anniversary of Mahatma Fule the Government of Maharashtra has constituted a separate Committee for Publication of Source Material of Mahatma Fule's life and Mission. Even then the Centenary Committee decided to publish Collection of works of Mahatma Fule in English in two volumes during the Centenary year. The First Volume namely Slavery (गुलामगिरी) was released on 28th November 1991—Death Anniversary of the Mahatma in Bombay. I am extremely happy that the Second and last Volume in the project is being brought out now. It is being released intentionally on 3rd January 1992 which happens to be Savitribai Fule's birth Anniversary (जयंती) at Naigaon, Tal. Khandala, Dist. Satara, her parents village (माहेर) at the hands of State Education Minister Shri Anantrao Thopte. The Committee is naturally happy for fulfilling the Commitment in specified time. This was possible only because of the ceaseless efforts and dedication of Prof. P. G. Patil (Bar-at-Law). Both the Volumes have been translated so ably by him. Selection of " Selections " is also his. We accepted his authority in this behalf and left the whole matter to him. It was a real stupendous task. ' Marathi ' of the age more than hundred years old—that too of Mahatma Fule's ' hammer and sickle ' Marathi—to be translated in to present day English was a harculean task. Barristar P. G. Patil came forward voluntarily to rescue the Committee. He even selected Mahatma's Akhands (अखंड) for translation without losing an iota of the poetic Lustre of the original! Words fall short to formalate my heartfelt thanks to him. The whole congregation of pro-changers—the reformists—the radicals—the protestants not only in India but in whole of English speaking world will applaud Prof. Patil's achievement. Rennaissance movements all over the world will ever remain obliged to him.

Is publishing this matrial stirring old brew? Whipping the dead horse? or Raking up old Controveries over again? We don't think so. Firstly it is part of history—historical documents. Secondly it is bringing out the revolutionary in Mahatma Fule and his unflinching mission. Many a time Mahatma Fule is alleged to be anti-Brahamin. Was be realy so?

Because of the British rule in India—which was described as ' Divine Dispensation ' by Justice, Govind Mahadeo Ranade. India came in contact with the socio-economic revolutions in the western world. Floodgates of modern knowledge were opened to the native intellegentia. The rennaissance in France-Italy and the American revolution along with the liberation of the Negroes in U.S.A. under the leadership of Abraham Lincoln proved to be

percolation tank for Indian Social Movements. Mahatma Fule was naturally impressed and awed by the thoughts and messages that emanated from these historical world happenings. The plight of the shudras and Ati-shudras (Depressed Classes) was worse than that of even negroes. In the western Renaissance the uprising was against the CLERGY and it's domination. In India also it had to be against the CLERGY, which in the Sanatan (Hindu) Dharma (Religion) was the Brahmins. The Language of India was and is still the language of Caste based on birth. Therefore the uprising and fight against the Purohit Class appeared to be against a particular caste. Could Mahatma Fule or Babasaheb Ambedkar or other social revolutioneries of their cult be blamed for this? The fight against the Brahmanical Society which is wrongly—because of Geography—described as Hindu [derived from the word Sindhu —(the river)], was natural. In any given society the talk of social reform has to begin with discussion and analysis of the tenets and practices of the religion that governs that society. In India the hold of Brahmanism was a strangle-hold ! The harshness of the language that revolutionaries like Mahatma Fule and Babasaheb Ambedkar had to measure up to the harshness and dominance of the system. Could a safety razor-blade be sufficient to cut down a trunk of a Babhul or Banyan Tree?

I thank the former Chief Minister of Maharashtra and present Defence Minister of India Shri Sharadrao Pawar for blessing all our efforts in a big way and writing an inspiring introduction to this Volume. I also thank the present Chief Minister Shri Sudhakarrao Naik for carrying on the torch ahead. Thanks are also due to Shri Anantrao Thopte, Education Minister and President of our Committee.

Shri Hari Narke deserves our appreciation and blessings in his untiring efforts in implementing our projects. Special mention needs to be made of Shri Mukundrao Patil, Prof. N. D. Patil, Shrimati Kamaltai Vichare and all other office-bearers.

D. T. RUPWATE,
Executive President.

Bombay:
3rd January 1992
(Savitribai's Birth Anniversary)

TRANSLATOR'S SUBMISSION

I am extremely happy to present the Second Volume– " Selections from the Collected Works of Mahatma Jotirao Phule." The first Volume ' Slavery ' was published on the 28th of November 1991.

Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14, 18 (second half), 19 (pp. 427-430 and p. 433) and 24 of ' The Universal Religion of Truth ' have been selected. Chapter 19 contains 33 definitions of the followers of the ' Universal Religion of Truth '. Page 33 sums up succintly the salient features of a family translating these tenets into day-to-day practice.

Mahatma Phule has sounded a clear ' Warning ' to those arm-chair philosophers of his time who declared incorrectly that the ' condition of the peasants of our time was much better than what it was about thirty years ago'.

In ' Priesteraft Exposed ' Jotirao has exposed the various tricks the priestly class used to practise on the ignorant and superstitious Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās of his time.

The last two sections of the ' Ballad on Chhatrapati Shivaji ' have been included here. Jotirao declares that he is proud to sing the glories of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj who was 'an adornment to the cultivators or tillers of the soil'.

In the letter to Shrimant Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda Jotirao describes the miserable condition of the masses of his time and prays to him to take urgent steps to ameliorate the condition of his subjects.

In ' The Ballad of the Conquered Slaves (Sections 3 and 4) Jotirao describes the pitiable condition of the masses and exhorts them to take education at any cost. He also praises Mahatma Gautama Buddha.

In' The Untouchables ' Apologia ' Jotirao envisages an imaginary situation—namely the visit of Her Majesty Queen Victoria to India (particularly to Bombay Presidency as it than was). When Her Majesty visits the poor hovels of the untouchables outside the village limit, a few representative Mahārs and Māngs describe, in vivid terms, their sub-human conditions even under the British raj. They request her to take urgent steps to introduce modern agricultural methods here. They further request her to undertake (1) public utility works and (2) liberal educational reforms.

The opening lines of ' The Cultivator's Whipcord ' ' For want of learning, intellingence was lost ' etc. are justly famous. Jotirao emphasises the sad plight of the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās and exposes the tyranny, oppression and exploitation of the masses at the hands of the priestly class and the indifferent British Officers. At the end of the book, Jotirao offers a few concrete suggestions to the English Government for the improvement of the agricultural methods and operations currently used by the ignorant farmers here.

The choice of the title ' The Cultivator's Whipcord ' is significant.

Appendices 'A' and ' B ' to ' The Cultivator's Whipcord ' are equally germane.

In the brief ' Letter to the Marathi Literary Conference ' Jotirao castigates the ' ivory-tower idealists '—the so-called sophisticated men of letters—and pleads for a new brand of literature which will be universal, all—embracing and truly representative of the people.

In ' Kulambin ' (a peasant-woman) Jotirao describes her wretched life and contrasts it with that of the Bhat woman.

I have also included translations of some selected poems ' (Akhands) ' of Mahatma Jotirao. Mahatma Jotirao has two strings to his bow-those of Apollo and Minerva. He wields a facile pen in prose and poetry. He condemns the Government's practice of collecting the ' Local Fund ' from the poor peasants and for its failure to utilise it for the benefit of the masses. He condemns the hypocrisy of the Brahmins. He sings paeans for ' Eternal Truth '. He tenders advice to the down-trodden people. He exposes the hollowness of the Brahmin-ridden educational policy of his time. All the poetic compositions spring straight from his heart and hence instinctively ' come home to men's businesses and bosoms.'

These ' Selections ' are but a sample of the rich variety of thoughts and meditations of the great social thinker and revolutionary of the 19th century. It was not for nothing that Dr. Ambedkar regarded Mahatma Phule as one of his three Gurus (the other two being Buddha and Kabir), and described him in a ' Dedication ' to one of his books as ' the greatest Shudra of modern times '.

Mahatma Jotirao's heart bleeds for the lowest and the lowliest of the earth. He was a doughty champion of their cause.

If the other Mahatma's (Gandhiji's) ambition was ' to wipe every tear from every eye ' Jotirao's ambition was to bring about an all–round transformation in the lives of the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās. ' The nobler a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath', said Francis Bacon. ' The whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men' declared Pericles years ago.

I have also included in this volume Mahatma Phule's ' Memorial addressed to the Education Commission (October 1882) as also his opinions on Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood (originally in English).

It is hoped that the discerning reader's appetite will be whetted to undertake a systematic study of the Collected Works of Mahatma Phule, and ' that he will think of them by day and dream of them by night.' Mahatma Jotirao Phule was, in the words of Oliver Goldsmith.

> ' As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
> Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
> Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
> Eternal sun-shine settles and its head!'

I am much beholden to the following friends for their unsti nted co-operation in my onerous undertaking :—

Shri Dadasaheb Roopwate, Mrs. Kamaltai Vichare, Shri Mukundrao Patil, Prof. N. D. Patil, Shri Bābā Adhav, Dr. Y. D. Phadke, Prof. (now, alas! the late) R. B. Joshi, Shri Vasant Moon, Prof. G. H. Mahajan, Dr. N. B. Patil, Dr. S. G. Malshe, Shri N. S. Kulkarni, Shri D. N. Chaudhari. Prof. M. P. Mangudkar, Prin. T. K. Tope, Dr. S. D. Karnik, Shri Hari Narke etc.

I must thank warmly Shri Prakash More, the Director of the Government Press, Shri P. L. Purkar, the Dy. Director and their colleagues for their ready co-operation and unfailing courtesy in my arduous task.

P. G. PATIL
Translator.

Bombay :
11th December 1991.

JOTIRAO GOVINDRAO PHULE
(1827-90)

[The brief Life-Sketch of Mahatma Jotirao Phule is written by the noted scholar Dr. Y. D. Phadke. He is the editor of the Collected Works of Mahatma Phule in Marathi (महात्मा फुले समग्र वाङ्मय). He is also an eminent scholar of Mahatma Phule and the Satyashodhak Movement.]

JOTIRAO GOVINDRAO PHULE occupies a unique position among the social reformers of Maharashtra in the nineteenth century. While other reformers concentrated more on reforming the social institutions of family and marriage with special emphasis on the status and rights of women, Jotirao Phule revolted against the unjust caste system under which millions of people had suffered for centuries. In particular, he courageously upheld the cause of the untouchables and took up the cudgels for the poorer peasants. He was a militant advocate of their rights. The story of his stormy life is an inspiring saga of a continuous struggle which he waged relentlessly against the forces of reaction. What was remarkable was his ability to stand up against all kinds of pressure without faltering even once and act always according to his convictions. Though some keen observers of the social scene in Maharashtra like Narayan Mahadeo Parmananda did acknowledge his greatness in his lifetime, it is only in recent decades that there is increasing appreciation of his service and sacrifice in uplifting the masses.

Jotirao Phule was born in 1827. His father, Govindrao was a vegetable-vendor at Poona. Originally Jotirao's family, known as Gorhays, came from Katgun, a village in the Satara district of Maharashtra. His grandfather Shetiba Gorhay settled down in Poona. Since Jotirao's father and two uncles served as florists under the last of the Peshwas, they came to be known as 'Phules'. Jotirao's mother passed away when he was hardly one year old. After completing his primary education, Jotirao had to leave the school and help his father by working on the family's farm. Jotirao's marriage was celebrated when he was not even thirteen.

Impressed by Jotirao's intelligence and his love of knowledge two of his neighbours, one a Muslim teacher and another a Christian gentleman persuaded his father Govindrao to allow him to study in a secondary school. In 1841, Jotirao got admission in the Scottish Mission's High School at Poona. It was in this school that he met Sadashiv Ballal Govande, a Brahmin, who remained a close friend throughout his life. Both

Jotirao and Govande were greatly influenced by Thomas Paine's ideas and they read with great interest Paine's famous book *'The Rights of Man.'* Moro Vithal Vālvekar and Sakharam Yeshwant Paranjapye were two other Brahmin friends of Jotirao who in later years stood by him in all his activities. After completing his secondary education in 1847 Jotirao decided not to accept a job under the Government.

An incident in 1848 made him aware of the iniquities of the caste-system, and the predominant position of the Brahmins in the social set-up. He was invited to attend a wedding of one of his Brahmin friends. As the bridegroom was taken in a procession. Jotirao accompanied him along with the relatives of his Brahmin friend. Knowing that Jotirao belonged to the Mali caste which was considered to be inferior by the Brahmins, the relatives of the bridegroom insulted and abused him. Jotirao left the procession and returned home. With tears in his eyes, he narrated his experience to his father who tried to pacify him. After this incident Jotirao made up his mind to defy the caste-system and serve the Shudrās and women who were deprived of all their rights as human beings under the caste-system.

Education of women and the lower castes, he believed. deserved priority. Hence at home he began educating his wife Savitribai and opened a girls' school in August 1848. The orthodox opponents of Jotirao were furious and they started a vicious campaign against him. He refused to be unnerved by their malicious propaganda. As no teacher dared to work in a school in which untouchables were admitted as students, Jotirao asked his wife to teach the girls in his school. Stones and brickbats were thrown at her when she was on her way to the school. The reactionaries threatened Jotirao's father with dire consequences if he did not dissociate himself from his son's activities. Yielding to the pressure, Jotirao's father asked his son and the daughter-in-law to leave his house as both of them refused to give up their noble endeavour.

Though the school had to be closed for sometime due to lack of funds, Jotirao re-opened it with the help of his Brahmin friends—Govande and Vālvekar. On 3 July 1851, he founded a girls' school in which eight girls were admitted on the first day. Steadily the number of students increased. Savitribai taught in this school also and had to suffer a lot because of the hostility of the orthodox people. Jotirao opened two more girls' schools during 1851-52. In a Memorial addressed to the Education Commission (popularly known as the Hunter Commission) in 1882, he described his activities in the field of education. 'A year after the institution of the female school I also established an indigenous mixed school for the lower classes, especially the

Mahars and Mangs. Two more schools for these classes were subsequently added. I continued to work in them for nearly nine to ten years'.

Jotirao was aware that primary education among the masses in the Bombay Presidency was very much neglected. He argued that 'a good deal of their poverty, their want of self-reliance, their entire dependence upon the learned and intelligent classes' could be attributed to the 'deplorable state of education among the peasantry'. He blamed the British Government for spending profusely a large portion of revenue on the education of the higher classes. According to him, this policy resulted in the virtual monopoly of all the higher offices under the Government by the Brahmins.

Jotirao boldly attacked the stranglehold of the Brahmins, who prevented others from having access to all the avenues of knowledge and influence. He denounced them as cheats and hypocrites. He asked the masses to resist the tyranny of the Brahmins. All his writings were variations on this theme. His critics made fun of his ignorance of grammar and philology, his inelegant language and far-fetched interpretations of Indian history and the ancient texts. They brushed his criticism aside by saying that he was merely echoing what the Christian missionaries had said about the Indian society in general and Brahmins in particular. The established scholars in his time did not take Phule's arguments seriously. His critics did not realise that Jotirao's acrimonious criticism was basically a spontaneous outburst of a genuine concern for the equal rights of human beings. Emotionally he was so deeply involved in his work that he could not make a dispassionate analysis and take a detached view of the social forces. Jotirao's deep sense of commitment to basic human values made it difficult for him to restrain himself when he witnessed injustice and atrocities committed in the name of religion by those who were supposed to be its custodians.

Widow remarriages were banned and child-marriage was very common among the Brahmins and other upper castes in the then Hindu society. Many widows were young and not all of them could live in a manner in which the orthodox people expected them to live. Some of the delinquent widows resorted to abortions or left their illegitimate children to their fate by leaving them on the streets. Out of pity for the orphans, Jotirao Phule established an orphange, possibly the first such institution founded by a Hindu. Jotirao gave protection to pregnant widows and assured them that the orphange would take care of their children. It was in this orphange run by Jotirao that a Brahmin widow gave birth to a boy in 1873 and Jotirao adopted him as his son.

For sometime, Jotirao worked as a contractor for the government and supplied building material required for the construction of a huge barrage at Khadakvāsala near Poona. He had a direct experience of working with the officials of the Public Works Department which was notorious as a hotbed of corruption. Except the British officers holding very high positions in the Department, the clerks and other officers were invariably Brahmins and they exploited the illiterate workers. Jotirao felt it necessary to explain to the workers how they were duped by the Brahmin officials. In one of the ballads composed by him, he described vividly the fraudulent practices resorted to by the Brahmin officials in the Public Works Department (printed at the end of *'Slavery'*).

In 1868, Jotirao decided to give access to the untouchables to a small bathing tank near his house. In his controversial book called *Slavery* published in June 1873, Jotirao included a manifesto which declared that he was willing to dine with all regardless of their caste, creed or country of origin. It is significant that several newspapers refused to give publicity to the manifesto because of its contents. His book *Slavery* was severely criticised for its 'venomous propaganda' against the Brahmins. Jotirao dedicated this book 'to the good people of the United States as a token of admiration for their sublime, disinterested and self-sacrificing devotion in the cause of Negro Slavery'. The book is written in the form of a dialogue. After tracing the history of the Brahmin domination in India, Jotirao examined the motives and objects of cruel and inhuman laws framed by the Brahmins. Their main object in fabricating these falsehoods was to dupe the minds of the ignorant and to rivet firmly on them the chains of perpetual bondage and slavery which their selfishness and cunning had forged. The severity of the laws as affecting the Shudrās and the intense hatred with which they were regarded by the Brahmins can be explained on no other supposition but that there was, originally between the two, a deadly feud arising from the advent of the latter into this land. Jotirao argued that the Sudrās were the sons of the soil while the Brahmins came from outside and usurped everything that was possessed by the Sudrās. He also claimed that what he had described in his book was 'not one hundredth part of the rogueries' that were generally practised on his 'poor, illiterate and ignorant Sudra brethren'.

On 24 September 1873, Jotirao convened a meeting of his followers and admirers and it was decided to form the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' (Society of Seekers of Truth) with Jotirao as its first President and Treasurer. Every member had to take a pledge of loyalty to the British Empire. The main objectives of the organisation were to liberate the Shudrās and Ati Shudrās

and to prevent their exploitation by the Brahmins. All the members of the Satya Shodhak Samaj were expected to treat all human beings as children of God and worship the Creator without the help of any mediator. The membership was open to all and the available evidence proves that some Jews were admitted as members. In 1876 there were 316 members of the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj.'

Jotirao refused to regard the *Vedas* as sacrosanct. He opposed idolatry and denounced the Châturvarnya. In his book *Sarvajanik Satya Dharma Pustak* published in 1891, his views on religious and social issues are given in the form of a dialogue. According to him, both men and women were entitled to enjoy equal rights and it was a sin to discriminate between human beings on the basis of sex. He stressed the unity of man and envisaged a society based on liberty, equality and fratemity. He was aware that religious bigotry and aggressive nationalism destroy the unity of man.

In 1876, Jotirao was nominated as a member of the Poona Municipality. He tried to help the people in the famine-stricken areas of Maharashtra when a severe famine in 1877 forced people in the rural area to leave their villages. Some of them had to leave their children behind and an appeal issued on 17 May 1877 by Jotirao indicates theat the Victoria Orphanage was founded under the auspices of the Satya Shodhak Samaj to look after these unfortunate children. From the beginning of the year 1879 Krishnarao Bhalekar, one of his colleagues, edited a weekly called *Deenbandhu* which was the organ of the Satya Shodhak Samaj. The weekly articulated the grievances of the peasants and workers. *Deenbandhu* defended Jotirao when Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, a powerful spokesman of the conservative nationalists, attacked Jotirao's writings in the most vitriolic style.

Narayan Meghaji Lokhande was another prominent colleague of Jotirao. Lokhande is acclaimed as the Father of Trade Union Movement in India. From 1880 onwards, he took over the management of *Deenbandhu* which was published from Bombay. Along with Lokhande, Jotirao also addressed the meetings of the textile workers in Bombay. It is significant that before Jotirao and his colleagues Bhalekar and Lokhande tried to organise the peasants and the workers, no such attempt was made by any organisaion to redress their grievances.

One of the charges levelled by Jotirao against the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj, the Sarvajanik Sabha and the Indian National Congress was that despite their programmes, in reality, they did very little to improve the lot

of the masses. He felt that these organisations were dominated by the Brahmins and were not truly representative in character. In his booklet called *Satsāra* (The Essence of Truth) published in June 1885, he criticised the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj. Addressing their leaders he declared, ' We don't need the help of your organisations. Don't worry about us' In his book, *Sarvajanik Satya Dharma Pustak,* a posthumous publication, he observed that the peasants and the untouchables were not members of either the Sarvajanik Sabha or the Indian National Congress. He warned that the persistent demand made by these organisations for Indianisation of the administrative services, if accepted, would lead to Braminisation of the services in India. He thought that it was difficult to create a sense of nationality so long as the restrictions on dining and marrying outside the caste continued to be observed by people belonging to different castes. Education of the masses would promote the process of nation-making.

It should be remembered that just as Jotirao did not mince words when he criticised the leaders of the reformist movement, he was equally fearless in criticising the decisions of the alien rulers which did not contribute to the welfare of the masses. When the government wanted to grant more licences for liquor-shops, Jotirao condemned this move as he believed that addiction to liquor would ruin many poor families. On 30 Novemeber 1880, the President of the Poona Municipality requested the members to approve his proposal of spending one thousand rupees on the occasion of the visit of Lord Lytton, the Governor-General of India. The officials wanted to present him an Address during his visit to Poona. Lytton had passed an Act which resulted in gagging the press and *Deenbandhu*, the organ of the Satya Shodhak Samaj, had protested against the restrictions on the right to freedom of the press. Jotirao did not like the idea of spending the money of the tax-payers in honouring a guest like Lytton. He boldly suggested that the amount could be very well spent on the education of the poor people in Poona. He was the only member out of all the thirty-two nominated members of the Poona Municipality who voted against the official resolution.

Another incident also revealed his attachment for the poor peasant and his courage in drawing the attention of a member of the British royal family to the sufferings of the farmers in rural areas. On 2 March 1888, Hari Raoji Chiplunkar, a friend of Jotirao, arranged a function in honour of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught. Dressed like a peasant, Jotirao attended the function and made a speech. He commented on the rich invitees who displayed their wealth by wearing diamond-studded

jewellery and warned the visiting dignitaries that the people who had gathered there did not represent India. If the Duke of Connaught was really interested in finding out the condition of the Indian subjects of Her Majesty the Queen of England, Jotirao suggested that he ought to visit some nearby villages as well as the areas in the city occupied by the untouchables. He requested the Duke of Connaught who was a grandson of Queen Victoria to convey his message to her and made a strong plea to provide education to the poor people. Jotirao's speech created quite a stir.

Throughout his life, Jotirao Phule fought for the emancipation of the downtrodden people and the struggle which he launched at a young age ended only when he died on 28 November 1890. He was a pioneer in many fields and among his contemporaries he stands out as one who never wavered in his quest for truth and justice. Though he was often accused of fomenting hatred between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins, very rarely an attempt was made to consider his scathing criticism in a broad perspective. The later generations also took considerable time to understand and appreciate the profound significance of his unflinching espousal of the ' rights of man ' which remained till the end of his life a major theme of his writings and a goal of his actions.

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SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF MAHATMA JOTIRAO PHULE

This Mahatma was truly blessed :

(By Maharshi Vitthal Ramji *alias* Annasaheb Shinde)

A true follower of the Truth, this *Jotiba* was truly *blessed !*

A genuine guardian of the down-trodden,

This Mahatma was truly blessed *!*

A gardener (horticulturist) by caste, his deeds were like a drawn (shining) sword (Excalibur!)

An eternally vigilant tiger (for the rights) of the common masses. Tell me who can hold a candle to him ? (He is absolutely incomparable !)

This Mahatma was truly blessed !

He was most forthirght and outspoken in his speech (upright like a ramrod), and his conduct was firm and uncompromising and straight (like a line or an arrow). He was a protector of the Truth, and he had a deep love for true Religion.

The gardener Joti was *truly blessed* ! He was more than a match for the bookish scholars, and was a sincere champion of the helpless and the down-trodden.

Words fall short to describe his many adorable actions.

This Mahatma was truly blessed!

Traduced, vilified and persecuted he was (by his enemies) but he bore it valiantly with a smile on his lips. He exterminated the foolish superstitions (in the people's minds). He made the four-fold sinister division of society appear as odious as vomit or spittle.

Some took higher education and (hence) were regarded (passed for) as scholars. Some became leaders by selling or bartering away their souls. Some begged their way to Mahatmaship. But an honest-to-the-core servant of the people is indeed very rare ! This *Mahatma was truly blessed !*

The Vedas stole (distorted the true image of) God. Hypocrites and impostors in religion rendered the true Religion as impure and spurious. Even the wise ones (scholars) were confused (by this). The blessed Jyoti (the bright refulgence) rose on the horizon at that time.

The people of Maharashtra revere and swear by *Dnyāneshwar* and by *Tukaram*. Jyotiba is the (aknowledged) leader of the masses (in India).

That is why this Maharashtra is in the vanguard of social reformers (and revolutionaries), and that is its distinctive merit (feature).

—×—×—

Chapter 11 of " The Universal Religion of Truth "
Merit (Meritorious Actions)

Balwant Hari Sakavalkar : What exactly is Merit ? (or meritorious action)?

Jotirao Govindrao Phule : If we do not cause mental or physical torture to our fellow human beings in order to become happy ourselves—that should be called a meritorious action.

Balwantrao : How can that be so ? It will be better if you will kindly explain it to me clearly.

Jotirao : If a person were to rob you of a thing forcibly or under the pretext of religion, causing you considerable anguish, with the intention of deriving a great pleasure from such action, and if he were to indulge in enjoying it in your presence, would you like that person's action ?

Balwantrao : I would certainly not like it, nor would anyone else in the whole world.

Jotirao : Have we, then, any right to rob human beings of a thing forcibly or under the pretext of religion and to indulge in enjoying it in their presence ?

Balwantrao : We have no such right whatsoever. And there is a dictum in the (spurious) Scriptures of the earth-gods-i.e. the Aryan Brahmins which clearly says " Helping others (an altruistic action) is meritorious and torturing others is sinful."

Jotirao : If this be the dictum of your Scriptures, then how is it that the earth-gods-the Aryan Brahmins—taboo-ridden, segregate themselves from others—(like menstruating women) and condemn the Christians, the Mohammedans as also all the Shudrās and Ati-shudrās (in our country) and subject them to all kinds of harassment ?

Balwantrao : If you were to quote some public illustrations (of this iniquity), it would greatly benefit the masses.

Jotirao : Firstly, the Aryan Brahmins, actuated by selfish motives, indulge in flesh-eating and in imbibing wines with Englishmen at their tables to their heart's content. But when they go home they pretend to be most orthodox, criticise their holy religion (Christianity) thereby prejudicing the minds of ignorant people against them. *Secondly,* being intoxicated with youthful sexual passions, they indulge in sexual intercourse with prostitutes who can be compared to the legendary Mastani in point of youth and beauty. But when they go home, they pretend to be most orthodox (and taboo-ridden) and criticise the holy Islamic religion. They do not allow them even to touch the water

in the wells, prejudice the minds of the ignorant masses against them (the Mohammedans), and thus indoctrinate their minds with hatred for them. *Thirdly*, they establish religious complexes like *Parvati* (in Poona) with money contributed by the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās with the sweat of their brows, move about freely as taboo-ridden, orthodox priests, and enjoy choicest delicacies and viands at ceremonial feasts to their heart's content. But they are so callous that they do not feel like giving even a morsel of stale jowar or bajra bread to the famished Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās who are the (authentic) tax-payers. But when they go home, they assume orthodoxy and taboos and do not deign even to touch the noble, high-born Princes like the Scindias, Holkars, and Gaekwars, dubbing them as Shudrās, and hence worse than beasts, and pride themselves unashamedly on their self-styled high castes (as Aryan Brahmins).

Prophet Grand

Yond the ken of mortal dreams
Shines thy eternal flame,
Where Minerva's ambrosial streams
Adorn the Shudrās' name.

O Master-Spirit, O Prophet Grand,
Hast fulfilled thy sacred tryst,
Vanquished by thy noble stand
Broker, parasite and priest.

Sleepless himself that others should sleep,
Hungry himself that others should eat,
Gargantuan self-with love so deep
Author authentic of a miraculous feat !

—P.G.P.

Chapter XII of ' The Universal Religion of Truth '

Caste—Distinctions

Yashwant Jotirao Phule : Is caste distinction found among human beings ?

Jotirao Govindrao Phule : Originally there was no caste—distinction among human beings.

Yashwant : Why was there no caste-distinction among human beings ?

Jotirao : If there is no caste-distinction among birds and beasts, how can there be such distinction among human beings only ?

Yashwant : Kindly explain, in some detail, your theory that there was originally no caste-distinction among human beings.

Jotirao : Birds and beasts differ from one another in point of their limbs etc. Biped human beings differ from quadruped animals considerably in point of their limbs etc. (The Aryan Brahmins maintain that) the *Aryan Brahmaji* created the four castes—namely the Brahmins, the Kshatriyās, the Vaishyās and the Shudrās, from (four) different parts of his body. Can you, then, show me (point out) who were the Brahmins among the (non-human) animals—such as donkeys, crows, jackals etc. ?

Yashwant : It is very difficult to prove who are the Brahmins among the (non-human) animals (beings) such as jackals, crows etc., because even the Aryan Brahmarishis also were practising non-vegetarians. From this we cannot prove that there was caste-distinction among birds and beasts. There are references in their (sacred) Scriptures to the effect that the four castes among human beings were created from the limbs of the (venerable) *Brahmaji.*

Jotirao : Then tell me from which parts (limbs) of the body of the four-mouthed Brahmadeo were the different birds and beasts (such as donkeys) created ?

Yashwant : We are making these statements on the authority of the (sacred) Scriptures of the Aryan Brahmins.

Jotirao : Have you ascertained and verified yourself all this from a personal perusal of the (sacred) books of the Aryan Brahmins ?

Yashwant : No, sir, because the Aryan Brahmins do not allow us even to see those books. And if we express a desire to hear (the contents of) those books, the Brahmins do not permit us even to hear those contents (being read out to us).

Jotirao : So without personally verifying the truth contained in the (sacred) books of the Brahmins, why do you accept blindly the blasphemy of caste-distinction based on the fictions spread orally by them ? This is sheer madness on the part of the Shudrās.

Yashawant : Sir, the Brahmins are venerable and high-caste and we Shudrās are too low and insignificant. Try as we might, how is it possible for us Shudrās to become (as great as) the Brahmins ? And how can the Brahmins be degraded to the low status of the Shudrās ?

Jotirao : Granted for argument's sake, that the Aryan Brahmins cannot be degraded to the low status of the Shudrās, then how is it that these self-same Brahmin earth-gods do not feel it below their dignity to partake of wine and bread and biscuits with the Ati-Shudrās (Mangs and Mahars) at the tables in the bungalows of the high Church dignitaries? And do they also not marry the girls belonging to the Ati-Shudra (low-caste) foreigners and lead (peaceful) lives ? From this you should challengs and defame the so-called sacred dictum that "the Brahmin is venerable everywhere ". That should do the trick.

Yashawant : So there are a number of different castes such as Dhangars (shepherds), Malis (gardeners, horticulturists) Kunbis (cultivators) in this unfortunate land of King Bali, never found elsewhere in the world. Do you mean to say that all of them are baseless (false) ?

Jotirao : This thesis will prove to be baseless and false, on careful consideration. Suppose a person has three sons. One of them spends his life-time in tending his flock of sheep; the second one plants saplings in his irrigated field and devotes himself to tending them (by removing the weeds therein) and the third one ploughs his field, sows corn in it, harvests it and he does this throughout his life-span. Would you, then, call the first one a shepherd, the second one a gardener and the third one a Kunbi (cultivator, farmer), and would you say that they belong to these three castes ?

Yashwant : How can we do that? (It would be wrong to do so).

Jotirao : Suppose now that an Aryan Brahmin has three sons. The first one chooses the profession of playing on a '*tabla*' to earn his livelihood; the second one adopts the profession of a physician (apothecary). Thus he prescribes and dispenses medicines to his patients and spends his time in dissecting the dead bodies, irrespective of caste-consideration; and the third one earns his livelihood by working as an humble cook for different families. Would you then say that the first one belongs

to the 'gurav' (caste), the second one to the apothecary-caste and the third one to the cook's caste (It would be quite wrong to term them so).

Yashwant : You are quite right, sir, we cannot state that they belong to those three castes. But does your theory not prove that the female scavenger belongs to the meanest caste as she is engaged all the time in performing a very dirty (unclean) job?

Jotirao : Just reflect, Yashwant, for a while. Our (venerable) mothers have performed the meanest duties of scavengers for us when we were just infants (in arms). Shall we be justified in condemning them as mean scavengers?

Yashwant : Who will dare condemn our (venerable) mothers as scavengers for having performed the meanest duties (chores) of scavengers for us when we were infants in arms? It would be most difficult (for me) to find such an ungrateful wretch anywhere upon the surface of this earth. But tell me, Tātyāsaheb, can we not determine the different caste-distinctions based on the respective qualities or temperaments or dispositions or aptitudes (personal nature as a whole) ? What have you to say about this?

Jotirao : We cannot determine the various caste-distinction based on the temperaments or personal nature or personal qualities of different human beings. Some parents provide a fine liberal education to their children and as they are extremely intelligent or clever they turn out as well-behaved and well-trained, and thus become qualified to shoulder high responsibilities (positions). On the other hand there are other parents who take great pains (efforts) to provide their children with the best possible education, but they are extremely dull and un-receptive, and hence turn out to be ' learned fools ' and vicious to boot, with the result that they tend to perform mean jobs. (You will also grant that) virtue or vice is not hereditary (which can be passed on by the parents to their children). For, we often find that the children of virtuous and profoundly learned parents do not turn out always as virtuous. Nor do the children of cunning (shrewd) Aryan Brahmins turn out to be as virtuous as the (original) Shankarāchārya himself. So an impartial and just gentleman can never say that if we choose intelligent children of the Ati-Shudra Chamars (shoe-makers) (and train them properly they will not become scholars who will hold a candle even to the Shankarāchārya himself.

Yashwant : Kindly enlighten me about how the inveterately invidious (caste-distinctions) were first introduced in our unfortunate land of kind Baliraja (a practice which is not found anywhere else in the world), and how the different castes such

as Brahmins and Mahārs and Māngs came into existence in India. I am most curious to learn all about this.

Jotirao : The Kshatriyās in India (the land of Balirājā) that is the original masters of the land here were known as Astiks, Pishāchās, Rakshasās, Ahirs, Kakatas, Bhuts, Kolis, Māngs, Mahars etc. They were extemely adept in fighting without the aid of arms (weapons) and were famed as brave and valiant warriors. They were of an epicurean (joyful) temperament and were given to the enjoyment of the good things of life. The kingdoms of most of these rulers (chiefs) were in a prosperous condition, and it would be no exaggeration to say that the land of *King Bali* was literally flowing with milk and honey. Just then the Aryans i.e. the Iranians discovered the useful and novel art of archery. So some adventurous, violent, covetous and ever avaricious Iranian Brahmins, Iranian Kshatriyās and Iranian Vaishyās banded together and invaded this land of King Bali, actuated by their greed for gold and harassed the gentle and well-behaved original inhabitants of this land a number of times and, it is rumoured that at the end of their campaigns, the Aryans flayed the skin off the bodies of the brave warriors of this land. (The Sanskrit words are (त्वचं कृष्णामरंधयत्). References to this barbarous practice are found in their so-called chronicles, namely the Vedās which they managed to conceal effectively from the brave inhabitants of our land. In sum, the Iranians drove away (banished) the brave warriors, the Kshatriyās of this land, to the nether world (Hades) i.e. America (this reference seems to be open to doubt) and began to call the remaining Kshatriyās by the pejorative names of Shudrās (Kshudra -insignificant), Ati-Shudrās, dasyus, (slaves), plunderers etc. They further persecuted them in diverse ways, and converted (reduced) them into hereditary slaves, serfs or helots. Finally the Aryans created a fourth category (class) comprising all the Shudrās in the land of Balirājā and assimilated them among the Iranian Brahmins, the Iranian Kshatriyās, and the Iranian Vaisyās. They (the Aryan Brahmins) further banned imparting of education (instruction) to the original (brave) Kshatriyās of this land (of Bali) i.e. the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās here. In addition to this, some cunning (shrewd) Aryan Rishis (sages) incorporated strict regulations into their (spurious) books with the evil intention that the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās should for ever be deprived of the healing balm of education. Saint Dnyaneshwar who is supposed to have performed the miracle of riding a stone-wall, and of having made a he-buffalo recite the verses from the Vedās, as also another saint Rāmdās (17th c.) who is supposed to have tested the loyalty of one of his disciples by using his mouth as a mortar (and pestle)-these and some other cunning and wicked

Aryan Brahmin saints composed heaps and heaps of new religious books to augment the stocks of similar books written by equally cunning and wicked Rishis of yore. They took care not to expose the wicked strategems of the Aryan Brahmins in having reduced the Shudrās and the Ati-Shudrās to the degrading status of serfs. On the contrary, they encouraged them to revere and worship various stone and metal images (icons) (of gods and goddesses invented by their fertile brains) and thus, entangled them into the imaginary snares (traps) of the trickery of Brahma. The cunning Aryan Brahmins also devised a most iniquitous code of regulations regarding the Māngs and Mahārs and enforced it most rigorously. That is why these wicked discriminating practices continued unabated among them. Not being content with this villainy, they practised hide and seek (i.e. a blatant deception) upon the all-powerful Creator of us all, styled themselves as earth-gods and incarnations of Lord Brahma Himself and systematically befooled the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās skilfully, and made them dance and clap in (so-called) divine ecstasy.

Yashwant : All the Brahmins, young and old alike, in India genuinely believe that the authentic Aryan Brahmins are to be found only in the land of King Bali (i.e. India) to-day. Their contention is that when the Aryan Parashurām (the chief of the Aryan Brahmins) vanquished the original Kshatriya warriors of this land, the Kshatriyās automatically lost all their (human) rights. The third category the Aryan Vaisyas were also wiped out automatically. They contend that the Aryan Brahmins and the Shudrās have survived in the land of Bali only in name. What have you to say about this contention of the Aryan Brahmins?

Jotirao : The contention of the Aryan Brahmins seems to be true. Some Aryans who came into the land of Bali along with the Aryan hordes, were adept in performing animal sacrifices. Those who were experts (well-versed) in conducting religious rites were called as Brahmins. Those Aryans who took up the profession of arms were known as Kshatriyās, while those Aryans who took to the pastoral life were called as Vāisyās. The original inhabitants of the land of Bali were called as Kshatriyās. The Aryan Brahmins, the Aryan Kshatriyās and the Aryan Vaisyās (of Iran) originally banded together and invaded this land of Bali a number of times, and, thus, destroyed the mastery of these original inhabitants of the land of Bali on their native land. Then these three classes of Iranians began to style themselves unanimously as Aryan Brahmins, and began to stigamatise the original inhabitants of this land whom they had managed to vanquish, by the pejorative and contemptuous name of Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās. The Iranians used to call their soldiers as 'Kshatriyās', whereas the inhabitants of the

land of Bali used to call all the subjects (people) as Kshatriyās. As the term 'Kshatriya' could be interpreted in both these senses, (meanings), the cunning Iranians (Aryan Brahmins) could manage to create such a confusion (of nomenclature).

Yashwant : From this it appears that the description of the natural (innate) qualities of a Brahmin given in the *Gita* of the Hindu religion (the Hindus) may have been a fiction incorporated in it in order to throw dust in the eyes of (deceive) the ignorant folk (masses). For instance:—

"Peace-loving nature, self control, penance, purity (of character), forgiveness, humility (straight—forwardness), learning, deep self-knowledge (spiritual knowledge), and theism–all these are the natural (innate) qualities of a Brahmin."

If this, indeed, be so, then why do the victorious, adventurous and cunning Aryan Brahmins regard the helpless, poor Shudras and Ati-Shudrās whom they had vanquished (on the battlefield) as mean, contemptible and insignificant all this while, in all things (in all departments of life)? Why do they detest them heartily all the time and why do they prevent them from enjoying (all) the human rights? This proves conclusively that the wicked and cunning Aryan Brahmins did not have even a modicum of pity (compassion) in their hearts (for their unfortunate compatriots). Let it be! (What baffles or surprises me most is), if our Creator is reputed to be an ocean of compassion and also extremely just, how is it that he did not feel like taking pity upon the Shudrās and the Ati-Shudrās who were oppressed and persecuted (by the Brahmins) in every conceivable way?

Jotirao : Our most compassionate creator, in His infinite mercy, sent the Mohammedans who believe in Him as our common Creator and who had supplanted (destroyed) all invidious caste-distinctions among them, to this country in order to liberate the helpless (crippled) Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās from the trammels of the cunning, wicked Aryans' thraldom. But unfortunately the Mohammedans set at nought His commendable commands and were given to a luxurious way of life–such as song and dance, soft and enervating comforts of life and a taste for good and rich viands. Thus they were so intoxicated with power and luxury (pelf) that they imagined themselves to be in the seventh heaven. So incensed was our Creator with the Mohammedans that He cast them into the utmost straits and destoryed all their glory and grandeur.

Jotirao : How is it that our Creator destroyed the grandeur of the over-weening Mohammedans and preferred to remain absolutely quiet or idle afterwards?

Jotirao : He did not remain idle at all afterwards (He did not keep quiet). He saw to it that the English people rose to prominence and prosperity from a barbarous state, endowed them with many admirable qualities (of head and heart) such as bravery (valiance), and sent them (directed them) to our country to accomplish His mission of releasing the helpless (crippled) Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās in our land from the trammels of the cunning and wicked Aryan Brahmins' thraldom. There are some benevolent and enlightened Englishmen who, inspired by the good teachings of a truly holy man of their religion (*Christ*) have been constantly trying to free the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās from the trammels of the Aryan Brahmins' wicked thraldom.

Yashwant : May I know the name of the holy man whose noble teachings have inspired these Englishmen to liberate the helpless Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās from the trammels of the Aryan Brahmins' thraldom. I would be most grateful to you if you would kindly enlighten me about him and his teachings.

Jotirao : The name of their noble, enlightened and exalted holy man is *'Yashwant'* (i.e. *Jesus=Yeshu*), and his noble teaching is as follows : "Love your enemies and do good unto them!"

Yashwant : If the deceitful and cunning Aryan Brahmins had heeded (respected) the good advice (gospel) of the great holy man–Jesus–and yet failed to discard (set aside) the teachings contained in their (spurious) books–enjoining them to treat the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās as serfs and helots, and if they still continued to behave in a most arrogant and undignified manner–it will surely result in a great catastrophe for them in this world. Can you foretell (prophesy, presage) that disaster?

Jotirao : I would like to foretell (prophesy) as follows:— If the cunning Aryan Brahmins do not totally destroy their wicked books (Scriptures) which enjoin them to treat the Shudras and Ati-Shudrās as serfs and helots, then the Almighty Himself who is justice incarnate and Omnipotent, will surely cause (enable) the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās themselves to condemn and ridicule the cunning Aryan Brahmins and their spurious (heretical) scriptures in no time at all.

Yashwant : From what you have told me, I begin to wonder whether the composers (writers, authors) of the four Vedās were gentlemen (men of honour and dignity) at all. I also begin to doubt their goodness (of heart). So if you happen to have any authentic knowledge about the said four Vedās, kindly impart it to me. The Shudrās and Ati-Shudras will be most beholden unto you (for the same).

Jotirao : Once upon a time there was a great and good (enlightened) researcher (scholar) in our land. He has criticised the Vedās roundly. I shall quote just a little line from that celebrated work here, for your information (enlightenment):—

"The authors (composers) of the three *Vedas* were deecitful, cunning and of a demoniac nature."

Yashwant : From this it is clear that some Aryan Brahmins have distinguished themselves as great scholars under the English rule (administration), and they are also highly qualified to occupy (adorn) positions of high authority and responsibility (to shoulder high responsibilities) in the service of the Govt. It is also a patent fact that their ancestors defeated, vanquished and totally extirpated the poor helpless Shudrās and Ati-shudrās, and thus confusion was worse confounded in their lives. Why do they (the highly educated Aryan Brahmins) not take any steps to remove this supreme confusion, root and branch, fruit and flower? Why does our Creator, (or *Jesus*) through whose palms strong iron nails were driven on the Cross, not remove the scales from the eyes of the Aryan Brahmins? Why does he not absolve them of their crimes and bring them back to the path of righteousness, in their own interest?

Jotirao : A careful study of the laws of operations of Nature proves that though the Rishi-like (saintly, sanctified, venerable) ancestors of the present Aryan Brahmins did not have to suffer the evil consequences of their villainous deeds in their own life-times, taking into consideraiton the villainous nature of their evil conduct (practices), their descendants (children, progeny) will most certainly have to suffer the evil consequences of the original villainy. (In the words of the Holy Bible "The fathers have eaten the sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge".) But I make bold to say that the present-day learned Aryan Brahmins will never come to their senses and will never repent their past villainy. In order to escape from the disasters and catastrophes which are impending against them, they will establish (found) many spurious religious and political organizatinos, and will invent many devices (ruses) to throw dust into the eyes of the Govt. as also of the ignorant masses. But I dare say, all these devices (ruses, stratagems) are foredoomed to ignominious failure.

Chapter (13) of " The Universal Religion of Truth "

The difference between the birds and the beasts and the Human Beings

Balwantrao Hari Sakavalkar : Has the Creator differentiated between the birds and the beasts and the human beings?

Jotirao Govindrao Phule : The Creator has endowed the birds and the beasts with a *natural instinct* (native intelligence). It remains in its original form with them all the time, and they can not effect any improvement whatsoever in their lives by using it. But the Creator has endowed man with a *rational faculty* (intellect). By its judicious use men can improve their lot considerably in the course of time.

Balwantrao : You have told me about ' natural instinct ' and a ' rational faculty ' (intellect). But I have not followed it properly. It would be fine if you were to explain the two terms in some more details to me.

Jotirao : We observe that there is no improvement whatsoever in the way the swallow had built its nest thousands of years ago and the nest it builds at the present time. This goes to prove that the Creator has not endowed the birds and the beasts with a rational faculty as it has done in the case of the human beings. Ancient man (man in the distant past) used to dwell in the hollows of trees and used to crawl on all fours and drink water from the streams like cattle, whereas modern man (civilised man) dwells in palatial buildings, reclines against soft bolsters (in his drawing rooms) and drinks water out of silver cups, and thus enjoys himself heartily. There's no comparison between these two specimens of men. From this we shall be justified in drawing the conclusion that by judiciously using the rational faculty with which the Creator has endowed him, he can achieve further all-round improvements in his day-to-day life.

Balwantrao : Does it, then, mean that the birds and the beasts do not possess any special virtues (qualities, faculties)?

Jotirao : How can we say that? The birds and the beasts are mostly pre-occupied with filling their own bellies. They do not, like the human beings, exploit and persecute others, without working themselves (without putting in useful work). Once upon a time in the (Mahābharat) war (between the Pandavās and the Kauravās) when Ashvatthāmā, the son of Dronacharya, was fighting with Bheema a rumour was set afloat that Aswatthama was killed, but whether it was the man Aswatthama or the elephant by the name of Aswatthama was not quite clear.

So Dronāchārya (fearing the worst) thinking that his son was killed, went to Dharma-rāj the *Truthful* to verify the factual position. Dharmarāj gave an equivocal answer, at the behest of Krishna, who was, thus, responsible for the death of Dronacharya, the guru of Dharma-rāj. (The Aryan Brahmins) deify the dark-skinned Krishna who forced the truthful Dharma-raja to commit a sin (to tell a blatant lie). They also worship Krishna in diverse ways and also encourage their ignorant, superstatious, fellow—men (the Shudrās and Atishudrās) to revere him as a god. They further masquerade (pose) as holy saints and rob and exploit them unashamedly under the guise of religion (piety) in broad daylight. Thus they lead luxurious lives–at the cost of exploiting the hard-working common populace, and thus condemn them to eternal penury and misery. I shall illustrate my point. Do the birds and the beasts ever write religious books about God, like the Aryan (Brahmin) Rishis, and do they ever assume airs (pretend to be) as holy sages and do they, thus, ever exploit their fellow—birds and beasts? (Never!) Do you find any of them practising forgery, preparing false documents, bearing false witness and giving wrong judgements? In sum, you don't find any so-called rebels or brigands like Nānā Peshwā or (Vasudev Balawant) Phadke among the birds and the beasts. So we can say that the Creator has endowed men with the priceless rational faculty (discerning intellect) and thus raised him to the highest stature in the whole creation. But alas! they have not put this priceless holy dower (gift) of the rational faculty to good use. (They have abused it). So I genuinely believe that the birds and the beasts, not endowed with a rational faculty, are far, far superior to the avaricious and rapacious human beings (in this world).

□ □

Chapter (14) of " The Universal Religion of Truth "

Religion

Yashawant Jotirao Phule : A washerman washes our clothes on payment of wages and thus earns his livelihood. Is that not then his duty (ordained or enjoined by religion) as a washerman?

Jotirao Govindrao Phule : A washerman washes our clothes for certain wages and thus earns his livelihood. Do we not sometimes wash our own clothes? So washing other people's clothes for a consideration (for wages) is a kind of occupation. How can we call it as a duty (ordained by religion)? So, if an Aryan Bhat/Brahmin were to work as another person's menial servant, and were to earn his livelihood by washing that person's clothes, will you be justified in calling him as a washerman? Can that Brahmin servant be said to perform the duty (ordained by religion) of a washerman?

Yashawant : A barber shaves us (hair-cutting etc.) on payment of wages (money) and earns his livelihood. Is that not then, his duty as a barber (ordained by religion?)

Jotirao : If shaving our heads is called (termed) as the religious duty of a barber, then is it not a fact that we shave our pubic hair in privacy? (We perform the duty of a barber in this instance). If some very cunning Bhat picks up a quarrel with a cunning barber on a trifling issue, then (it is found that) many Aryan Bhats/Brahmins collect razors etc. (the barber's implements) and shave other Bhats'/Brahmins' heads, for a certain fee. Thus they practise the occupation of a barber for that occasion. Shall we be justified in saying that they (the Brahmins) are practising the occupation of a barber? (Certainly not).

Yashawant : The sweepers (scavengers) earn their livelihood by sweeping our courtyards and disposing of our exereta (night soil) safely. Is this then not the occupation of a sweeper (scavenger)?

Jotirao : If scavenging and sweeping for a consideration (wages, fees) be the (religiously ordained) duty of a scavenger, then, tell me, do we not perform the same scavenging duties for our near relatives who are bed-ridden in our homes? So scavenging for others for a consideration (wages) is a kind of occupation. How are we justified in calling it a (religiously ordained) duty? Supposing a dunce of an Aryan Bhat/Brahmin were to be a menial servant of another person, and if he were to perform the scavenging duties for that person, will you call that Brahmin as a scavenger? For instance, keeping flocks (of sheep) and grazing them (in the pastures) is not the (religiously ordained) duty of shepherds but is their occupation; engaging in agriculture (cultivating, farming) is not the (religiously ordained) duty of

cultivators (farmers) but is their occupation ; engaging in horti-cultural work is not the (religiously ordained) duty of horticul-turists, but is their occupation; to serve others for (daily) wages is not the (religiously ordained) duty of servants but is their occupation; building others' houses is not the (religiously ordained) duty of carpenters but is their occupation; shoe-making is not the (religiously ordained) duty of shoe-makers but is their occupation; working as watchmen is not the (religiously ordained) duty of Ramoshis (one of the twelve Balutdars) but is their occupation; to serve the cruel victors is not the (religiously ordained) duty of the hapless vanquished populace, but is a sign of their helplessness; to commit burglary into the houses of unsuspecting, careless citizens is not the (religiously ordained) duty of cunning thieves (burglars), but is their sleight of hand (trickery); to refuse to impart education to the Atishudrās is not the (religiously ordained) duty of the victorious Aryan Bhats/Brahmins, but is a result of their vengeful hatred (for them). To rob and exploit the ignorant vanquished populace is not the (religiously ordained) duty of the Aryan Bhats/ Brahmins but is a sign of their cunning nature; to accept bribes from the ignorant people is not the (religiously ordained) duty of Government officers while engaged in performing their (Govt.) duties but is their cunning skill which is tantamount to treachery to the Government; to rob and defraud the ignorant people under the guise (pretext) of religion, and to thrive on these sinful gains is not the (religiously ordained) duty of the decent, honourable but idle Aryan Bhats but is their blatant rank roguery (trickery); to incite (instigate) the gullible Shudrās to revolt against the established English Government and thus to land the ignorant Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās in a great quandary (crisis) is not the (religiously ordained) duty of the cunning Peshwā and the equally cunning (Vasudev Balwant) Phadke, but is treacherous treason on their part; to elevate themselves to a high (social) pedestal and to indulge in various taboo-ridden practices and at the same time to look down upon (to condemn) the rest of the populace (as mean and contemptible) is not the humanitarian religion of the Aryan Bhats/Brahmins but is the treacherous caste-distinction which enables them to regard the rest of the (people in the) world as contemptible and unholy. To indulge in taboo-ridden observances ostentatiously on returning home after indulging in immoral amorous dalliance with prostitutes at their dens of pleasure is not the decent ideal conduct of honourable men but is a sure sign of their venality and sinfulness; being condemned to eat the flesh of dead animals to keep the wolf from the door is not the (religiously ordained) duty of the Māngs and the Mahārs (the Atishudrās) but is a measure of their indigence and helplessness; to slaughter healthy cattle (cows etc.) mercilessly at the time of the sacrificial

rites and the death anniversaries under the pretext of religion and to enjoy their flesh is not the decent, ideal conduct befitting honourable Aryan Bhats/Brahmins but is a sign of their indulgence in flesh-eating.

Yashawant : Is it not the permissible (accepted) duty of the rulers (the ruling Govt.) to levy and collect taxes from the ryots (subjects)?

Jotirao : To levy and collect taxes sufficient enough to enable the ruler to protect himself and his subjects from the depredations of robbers, brigands and the cunning religious hypocrites and other scoundrels is the permissible (duly accepted) prerogative of the ruler. How can we term it as a (religiously ordained) duty?

Yashawant : (If the Govt. were) to spend the amount of taxes levied from the subjects not for (providing comforts and facilities for) the subjects, but on maintaining wholly useless (good-for-nothing) cunning Aryan Bhats and on providing luxuries and comforts for itself, what would be the (net) result of such a policy?

Jotirao : By following such an (unwise) policy, many kings (princes) lost their property (estate), they had to bite the dust, and (I dare say) (others following their unwise policy) will similarly come to grief (will fall on evil days) in the future.

Yashawant : Is it not the (religiously ordained) duty of the children to obey implicitly the commands of their parents?

Jotirao : When we were infants (in-arms), we were very weak and helpless. Our (loving) parents showered their affection on us, then brought us up lovingly, and imparted good instruction and education to us. We must be eternally beholden unto them (for this kindness). So (it follows that) when our parents will be weak and helpless in their old age, we (as their children) should take tender care of them (treat them with great respect and maintain them in comfort). And if we repay our debt of gratitude to them in this manner, the bonds of mutual love and respect that bind us (as parents and children) inextricably together will be strengthened considerably.

Yashawnat : There are some persons who do not take tender care of their old and helpless parents who, abjure the company of women by taking a vow of eternal celibacy, who cover their bodies with ashes and resemble caricatures presented in pantomimes (or tableaux) and thus lead their lives as idle parasites i.e. idle mendicants (passing off as anchorites). What is your view (opinion) of such persons?

Jotirao : You should ask the mothers of those who abjure the company of women and who take a vow of life-long celibacy as also of those anchorites, who have borne the foetuses in their wombs for nine (long) months, about this question. They will surely give you a convincing answer. If all the men and women in this universe had taken vows of life-long celibacy in order to secure salvation, and if these confirmed celibates (men and women) as also the male and female anchorites (Sadhus) pretend to pass themselves off as holy men and holy women, and if they further meditate about or recite the holy name of the imaginary eternal godhead–*Vishnu*–who lies recumbent upon the body of the imaginary serpent Shesha (hence he is known as *'Shesha-shayee'*), they will surely starve themselves to death within a span of say—three to four months. Don't you think so? This may come to pass, as these holy men and women (celibates) cannot count upon the support of any other person for maintaining themselves (to survive, to keep body and soul together). Hence it is the (ordained) duty of a servant to serve his master. To entice youngsters to amorous ways (dalliance) is the (ordained) duty of a prostitute. To look down upon (and condemn as mean and contemptible) the Shudrās and Atishudrās is the (religiously ordained) duty of the holy Aryan Brahmins. Begging (for food or money) is the (sanctified) occupation of the Aryan Bhats/Brahmins and they have elevated it to the status of the (religiously ordained) duty of the Bhats. As the term 'religiously ordained duty' lends itself to various interpretations (connotations in popular parlance) the cunning Aryan Brahmins endow the term 'duty' (or 'religion') with different interpretations on different occasions to serve their ends. And, thus, they succeed in guarding and safeguarding their own (selfish) interests.

Yashawant : (We generally suppose that) 'Religion' or 'religiously ordained duty' is a connecting link between our Creator and the humankind which He has created. We shall be grateful to you, Sir, if you will kindly enlighten us all about the appropriate (natural) sacred meaning of the term 'Religion' or 'religiously ordained duty' or about the grandeur and glory of the said Creator.

(Here two pages of the original text are purposely omitted from this translation. They describe the earth, the planets and the stars, as also the various limbs and organs of the human body and their functions. They also describe the different fruits, vegetables, plants, and also the many fragrant flowers created by the Creator for the comfort and delectation of mankind—Translator).

Yashawant : If the Creator in His infinite mercy has provided all these facilities, as mentioned above, for the comforts and

happiness of the whole of mankind, then why was there a general discontent in the world and how was sorrow born (came to pass) in this world?

Jotirao : The reason is as follows:—We human beings did not hold the Creator in fear and awe all the time. Men and women created by Him did not entertain fraternal feelings about one another in their hearts. As a result of this, Truth (truthful conduct) declined (fell on evil days), an atmosphere of discontent spread evereywhere in this world, and hence Sorrow (unhappiness) held its sway (reigned supreme) in this world.

Yashawant : I shall be grateful to you if you will kindly explain these things in some detail to me.

Jotirao : All men in the world (India) regard themselves as very learned, and flaunting their over-weening pride, tend to forget all too easily that their own mothers have borne them (as foetuses) in their wombs for nine long months and subsequently gave birth to them. This is rank ingratitude on their part! (This is the height of ingratitude on their part!) They also tend to neglect with impunity the welfare of their own sisters born of their own mothers either before or after their own births (i.e. their elder or younger sisters). Men in our country did not treat with respect their own daughters or daughters-in-law. On the other hand they stigmatised (treated with contempt) their mothers, sisters, daughters and daughters-in-law (i.e. all women as such in India) as an un-natural (unbecoming), and a very untruthful and cunning breed of women as a whole. They further treat them with great contempt as though they were serfs and slaves captured as a booty in a battle. As a result of this sinful injustice, Truth (truthful conduct) declined (fell on evil days), an atmosphere of discontent spread everywhere, and Sorrow was born (and held its sway in this world).

Yashawant : If all the men in the world were to follow the path of Truth, and if they did not deprive all the women in the world of their inalienable *Human Rights,* then, don't you think that the Kingdom of God (a divine kingdom) will be inaugurated in this world and that all the men and women (mankind) will be truly happy and contented?

Jotirao : If we were to behave as you have explained above, the kingdom of God will not come to pass (will not be inaugurated) in this world and we shall not be happy and contented. And unless all the men follow the path of Truth and treat one another (conduct themselves towards one another) with pure and holy feelings in their hearts, (with love and charity), they will not be knit together by pure, loving and fraternal bonds

(of feelings and emotions). And hence, I am sorry to say, the kingdom of God is not likely to come to pass (will not be inaugurated in this unfortunate, hapless, sorrow-ridden) world of ours, for the present.

Yashawant : It would be very fine (nice) if you would kindly give a telling (striking) illustration in support of your statement.

Jotirao : I shall quote a saying of that great saint—Jesus Christ here. That great, sacred saying (dictum) of Jesus will carry conviction to our hearts with finality. It is as follows :

" Do unto others as you would be done by ! "

Second half of Chapter 18 of
" The Universal Religion of Truth " (pp. 420–427)

Govindrao : This idea has just struck me. Isn't it very strange that the Brahmins who call themselves as the preceptors of the eighteen Varnās drink the urine of the cows as a holy drink (sanctified drink)—the cows which eat the excreta of the Shudrās and Ati—Shudrās—but the same Brahmins do not touch even the best among the Ati-Shudrās during their meals, as it pollutes them. What must be the basis (justification) for their Conduct?

Jotirao : The Shudrās and Ati—Shudrās are absolutely ignorant (illiterate). The cunning Aryan Brahmins do not think it below their dignity to worship the crawling poisonous snakes, as also the monkeys. But they take a great delight in eating and drinking (and also in associating shamelessly) with the prostitutes whom the Shudrās and Ati-shudrās abominate (loathe, treat contemptuously) and hence do not even share their food with them. So what, then, is the basis (authority) for the evil practice of the cunning Aryan Brahmins in regarding even the best among the Ati-Shudrās as mean and contemptible? A little reflection will prove to you the absurdity of their queer behaviour.

Govindrao : This past history (of the Aryan Brahmins) only proves conclusively that they do not bring out into the open (do not publish, expose) their (so-called sacred) Vedās, unlike the Christians (who gladly bring out into the open (publish) their own Scriptures.) The Aryan Brahmins, being very shrewd and cunning, know very well that if they publish or make available to the common people their Vedās, their glamour, mystery or importance will vanish in no time. This is a legitimate conclusion.

Jotirao : It is quite true that the cunning Aryan Brahmins have hidden their (sacred) Vedās (from the common people) and hence the Vedās have been regarded with an unjustified veneration (and prestige) by the ignorant Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās-But if they bring their Vedās out into the open, translate them into Marathi (vernacular) and make them available to the public at large, as the Christians have done with regard to their Bible, then I dare declare confidently that even the women from the acrobatic class (community) will not hesitate to make fun of (pour ridicule upon) the cunning Aryan Brahmins and their (so-called sacred) Vedās.

Govindrao : Then do you mean to say that the Vedās do not contain anything in them which can teach and enlighten the people in the wide world?

Jotirao : How can you remark like this? The portions in the Vedas which deal with ethical problems are specifically composed with a view to serving the special interests of their selfish and cunning caste men—the Aryan Brahmins. There is nothing in the Vedas which is likely to be accepted by all the vanquished people of this land—such as the Shudras and Ati-shudras, the Bhils, the Kolis (fishermen)—all dubbed as Mlenechhas—as it is not likely to be conducive to their general welfare.

Govindrao : Secondly, you said some time back that each man can prove, from his own personal experience, how he should conduct himself to (behave with) his (next-door) neighbour. The Aryan Brahmins as also the authors of their (sacred) Vedas did not know this cardinal rule (principle) at all. I now request you to explain, in some detail, this thesis.

Jotirao : When our Creator created all beings on this earth, He created man as a free human being (endowed him with an independent judgement, with a 'free will'). He has also ordained that all human beings are entitled to enjoy their 'human rights' freely (without any curbs or restrictions on their rights). And hence (it follows that) each person has an (inalienable) right to occupy positions of power and authority in his village or in that particular administrative division or region.

Govindrao : It appears, from what you say, that all human beings are entitled to occupy all positions of authority. (I can't understand), by what canons of justice, have the cunning Aryan Brahmins condemned and converted the Shudras and Ati-Shudras into serfs and helots, and how they themselves became their (unjust and tyrannical) masters?

Jotirao : Our Creator was deeply angered by this trickery of the Aryan Brahmins whereby they became the masters of the Shudras and Atishudras most unjustly. That is why (I conjecture that) He may have enabled the Mughals, the Pathans, the Portuguese, the French and the English to vanquish the rule and prosperity of the cunning Aryan Brahmins and also made them their masters (they established their supremacy over them).

Govindrao : I now request you to explain to me as to what tortures, (punishments, persecutions) were inflicted upon the cunning Aryan Brahmins by the Christians to make them realise the enormity of the injustice practised by them upon the Ati-Shudras etc.

Jotirao : First, enlightended Englishmen like Colonel *Legrand* Jacob (?), Sir William Jones and others exposed the true nature (contents) of the Scriptures like the Vedas, the Smritis, and other compositions held sacred by the cunning Aryan Brahmans which

describe, in some details, how they (the Brahmins) vanquished the Kshatriyās and how they persecuted the Shudrās and Ati-shudrās–These learned scholars investigated the detailed history of the Aryan Brahmins' treachery and published it (gave wide publicity to it) to all the world. As a result of this, the eyes of us all Shudrās are opened to that history, and the exact nature of the villainy (treachery) of the cunning Aryan Brahmins has been brought home to the Shudras and Ati-Shudrās in a blinding flash (vividly).

Govindrao : When enlightened Englishmen like Col. Legrand Jacob (?), Sir Wiliam Jones and others exposed the treachery of the cunning Aryan Brahmins, it is most surprising that the English Government did nothing (took no steps) to release the Shudrās and Atishudrās from the thraldom (slavery) of the Aryan Brahmins.

Is it not very strange?

Jotirao : The English Government desired that the cunning Aryan Brahmins should be convinced of the villainy practised by their distant ancestors upon the Shudrās and Atishudrās (for centuries), that they should repent for it, and they should cease forthwith their attitude of regarding the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās as contemptible and mean, and should stop perseeuting them in any way. So the English Government expended huge amounts of money collected by way of different taxes levied upon all the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās in this land of *King Bali*—and established (English) Schools at a number of places where tuition-free education was imparted to the children of the cunning Aryan Brahmins, hoping that these children will acquire real knowledge and enlightenment (about the true state of affairs).

Govindrao : It is true that the English Government opened English schools for the children of the cunning Aryan Brahmins out of the huge amounts of money collected by it by way of various taxes contributed by the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās by the sweat of their brows to the State exchequer, and those Brahmin children may have become scholars (being educated in those Schools). Now kindly enlighten me as to what steps these educated children of the Aryan Brahmins have taken (for ameliorating the condition of the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās). It would, indeed, be an eye-opener both to the English Government and the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās.

Jotirao : It is a fact that the children of the cunning Bhats (Brahmins) were educated (became scholars) through the English

Schools opened for them out of the funds collected by way of taxes from the ignorant Shudras and Ati-Shudras (in India). They desired to hide effectively from public view the Brahmanical plot (villainy) which had a religious garb but whose kernel was purely political. This deceit was resorted to in order to save them from possible embarrassment. Thus blind-folded, they hastened to establish two Societies–the *Brahmo Samaj* and the *Prārthanā Samāj.* The religious philosophy on which these two Societies are founded is a hotch-potch stealthily purloined from the tenets of Christianity. The (Brahmin) followers of these two Societies (meditate, worship) with closed eyes before the imaginary Brahmāji, and by this ruse (practice) are attempting strenuously once more to instil into the minds of the ignorant Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās the old fiction (heresy) regarding the imaginary Brahmā.

Govindrao : Have the children (sons) of the cunning Aryan Brahmins established any other Organisations or Societies besides the above-mentioned two Societies?

Jotirao : I have heard (reports to the effect) that among the Societies established by the sons of the cunning Aryan Brahmins, two are noteworthy—namely the *Public* (*Social*) Organisation (the Sarvajanik Sabha) in Poona, and the (*Indian*) *National Congress.*

Govindrao : As the organisation is called the Public (Social) Organisation, one expects that Kunbis (farmers), Malis (horticulturists), Dhangars (shepherds), Kolis (fishermen), Bhils (a nomadic tribe) etc. must have been enrolled as its members.

Jotirao : I think that there is little possibility of the Kunbis and other cultivators being enrolled as members of this Public (Social) Organisation, as you expect (guess).

Govindrao : Then grocers and petty shopkeepers and other tradesmen such as Gujjars and Mārwāris (money-lenders) and Salis, Koshtis (weavers), Khatris etc., i.e. those who engage themselves as hosiers and clothiers, may be enrolled as members of this Organisation.

Jotirao : My information is that Gujjar and Marwari traders, and hosiers and clothiers like the Salis and Koshtis (weavers) have not been enrolled as members of this Organisation.

Govindrao : Then tell me if the *twelve* Balutes such as the ironsmith, carpenter, shoe-maker, potter, barber, washerman and the other twelve *Alutes* such as the *Mangs,* the *Bhats*

and the *Joshis* have been enrolled as members of this organisation.*

Jotirao : Never (Not at all). Do not expect to find the twelve Balutdars as members of this Organisation. But a large number of the Alutdars such as the Brahmin Joshis and Upadhyas, is to be found among the members of the said Organisation There are some Government Officers who cannot be enrolled as members *openly*. Out of deference for their (high Social) Status, some two dozen persons belonging to other castes have also been enrolled as members of this Organisation One or two of them are affluent, whereas some others earn a mercenary (sinful) living as clerks or lawyers (pleaders).

Govindrao : The total population of this land of King Bali (India) to-day is about twenty crores approximately.

Govindrao : The Aryan Brahmins may account for about two crores approximately. If the Aryan Brahmins of Poona establish an Organisation in Poona where about two dozen members are recruited from the other (non-Brahmin) castes (and the rest are invariably and predominantly Brahmin members), what earthly justification can there be for designating (calling) that Organisation as *the Public (Social) Organisation?*

Jotirao : Your point as well-taken (you are quite right). Have the Brahmin members of this Public Organisation ever allowed the Mahars (members) to sit along with them in this Organisation, and have they ever cared to discuss sundry matters pertaining to their unfortunate practice of eating the flesh of dead animals? Or have they ever cared to send a memorial to the Government about these *matters* (regarding eating the flesh of dead animals) on behalf of their organisation? I have yet to hear of any such thing.

Govindrao : There is not a single application in the records of the Organisation available in its office which pertains to the interests of any particular person or any particular class of people "(to be forwarded to the Government)". This is the

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*Chougula, Mahar, Sutar (carpenter), Lohar (iron-Smith), Shoe-maker, potter barber goldsmith, Joshi, (washerman, gurav (warshipper of God), fisherman—these twelve categories of the village populace are known as the *twelve Balutdars* or twelve Karus.

Teli (oil-merchant), Tamboli (Seller of betel leaves) Sali, Sangar (weavers), tailor, Mal (horticulturist). Gondhali, Dawar, Bhat, Thakar, Gosavi, Jangam, Mulana (ni) (Wajantri) those who play on musical instruments) ghadsi, Kalawant (artist), tarāl (village crier) or Korbu, Bhoi—are known as the eighteen Narus or Alutdars.

In course of time, some of the Alutdars were promoted to the status of *Balutdars* and some Balutdars were demoted in status as Alutdars.

These village artisans practised their respective arts or skills and served the village community faithfully. That is why the farmers owning their own lands used to give them a portion of their agricultural produce annually on which they subsisted. The Balutdars claimed it as their right, *whereas* the Alutdars got it as a favour.

Quoted in '*Gāv-gāda*" by Trimbak Narayan Atre (1915) in the chapter "Bhārit"

contention of a braggart who airs his views freely in the meetings of this Organisation—(which are like the game of make-believe played by little girls at home).

[The scope of this so-called Public (Social) Organisation is so parochial].

Jotirao : His contention may be quite justified—as he considers himself to be the wisest person in the whole world. You should just imagine that the English Government has just advertised in the newspapers that any *Mahar* or *Mang* who is well-versed in *Marathi, Sanskrit* and *English* and who can carry on correspondence in all these (three) languages—will be given a salary of Rs. one thousand and five hundred *per month.* How many Mahārs or Māngs will be competent or eligible to apply for such a post?

Govindrao : Not a single Mahār or Māng will be found suitable (competent, eligible) for such a post.

Jotirao : But you will surely find many petitions (memorials) in the records of the Public (Social) Organisation to the effect that the English Government be pleased to appoint Hindus as Collectors (to the posts of Collectors) like the Europeans (Englishmen). (Here the term 'Hindus' is used vaguely). Though the petition mentions the vague term 'Hindus'—what it means in reality is that the Aryan Brahmins' alone will grab those posts. What a wonderful Public (Social) Organisation is this ! And what a wonderful hypocritical record of (maintained by) that Organisation !

Govindrao : Now kindly explain in some detail (enlighten me) about this (*Indian*) *National Congress,* so that the eyes of the gullible (simpleton) compassionate English Government as also of the ignorant Shudras and Ati-Shudrās (in our country) will be opened to the stark reality on the ground. (They will realise the true nature of the National Congress). Both the parties will benefit by it considerably.

Jotirao : Please listen to me carefully. The cunning Aryan Brahmins who follow the mischiveous, cunning and treacherous religion of their Aryan ancestors—look down upon (treat contemptuously) all the ignorant Shudrās. (It is an ironical fact) that the ignorant Shudrās treat the Mahārs as contemptible, while the ignorant Mahārs treat the Māngs equally contemptuously. The taboo-ridden ultra-orthodox cunning Aryan Brahmins not only treat the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās contemptuously, but they refuse to interdine and inter-marry with them. They have gone one step further and have totally forbidden the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās to inter-dine and inter-marry among even themselves. Because of these mischievous taboos

and restrictions (imposed by the Aryan Brahmins upon the Shudras and Ati-Shudras), they are seen following diverse ways of behaviour, diverse habits regarding food and drink, diverse etiquettes etc., which are at variance with one another. If the mass of the people are so riven and divided among themselves, they form a veritable hotch-potch. How can such a hotch-potch ever form a *'Nation'?* (be ever called a 'Nation'?) Dear friend, note that these cunning Aryan Brahmins invariably treat all other sections of the population in our land (in the world?) contemptuously and they regard all others with jealousy and hatred from the bottom of their hearts. I venture to state that these Brahmins will surely not hesitate to condemn these ignorant and foolish Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās to the depths of perdition (hell) to serve their own selfish interests. So I declare confidently that if these cunning Aryan Brahmins were to masquerade (pretend to be) as the Americans or the French professing one religion—i.e. Chirstianity and were to found not one but hundreds of such *"National Congresses"* in our country, no reasonable, discriminating or wise Shudra or Ati-Shudrā will (be so foolish as to) ever join the Brahmins' 'National Congress'.—Should they do so (foolishly), the English Government will surely be fed up with them (will not take kindly to such a move on the part of the Shudras and Atishudrās).

Govindrao : If the wise reasonable and discriminating Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās will not care to join the National Congress and why should they not demand their due rights from the English Government, along with the Brahmins (as the Brahmins are demanding theirs)? Who is preventing them from so demanding their rights?"

Jotirao : I have nothing to say about this incoherent prattle of that pretender just now. Forget about it. We shouldn't even deign to mention him in this context just now. But I would like to ask you a few questions. Had the cunning Aryan Brahmins not forbidden the Shudrās to learn Sanskrit—till now ? Had they not tried their level best to prevent the children of the Ati-Shudrās from seeking admission to the (primary) schools till now ? And when not a single Ati-Shudrā had received education enough to qualify him to perform the duties of a lower grade clerk in the Mamlatdar's office, this (Brahmin) who pretends to be innocent but is at heart a rascal of the first water, presumes to proffer advice to the people who are well-versed in the different fine arts of India, "Be prepared to be as proficient in artistic skills as the Europeans and be ready to compete with (march alongside of) the best artists in the wide world. Compete with them as equals or perish" This hypocrite is a faithful follower of the arch-mischief-monger 'Sage' *Nārad,*

who doesn't advise the Shudras to follow the righteous path but instigates them to follow the sinful path. While pretending to initiate the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās into the mysteries of trade and business, he decamps after stealing (Brahmins') 'National Congress', then is it not very strange (surprising) that Mr. Hunter—an Englishman-presumes to pontificate to the English Government to the effect that if (the Government) should appoint the Hindus to high, responsible positions in the administration (as Collectors etc.) ? (He preaches these sermons in his addresses to the Congress).

Jotirao : It can be explained easily. Mr. Hunter has some knowledge only about the Aryan Brahmins among the Hindus, and he is absolutely ignorant of the true condition of the Shudrās, Ati-Shudrās, the Bhils (tribals), the Fishermen etc. That is why he is making such wild, sweeping statements. There's an earlier example of this type. Sometime back, *Lord Ripon* (the Governor-General) did not bother to find out the exact position of the Shudrās, Ati-Shudrās, Bhils and Kolis–all Hindus—but believed erroneously that the Aryan Brahmins alone constituted (were) the authentic Hindus -, and conferred upon the Aryan Bhats the rights and privileges of (members of) Municipalities in India. As a result of this unwise and hasty decision, all the non-Brahmins ('non-Aryans') were put to great deprivations and hardships. If you just reflect upon this a little, you will realise the extent of the mischief caused to the non-Brahmins ('non-Aryans').

Govindrao : One happy-go-lucky pretender, donning the dress of a Bhat-Brahmin, is prattling incoherently as follows :— " Why should the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās not become the members of the precious (gift of) the Vedās (he is an arch-thief). He deserves to be called as the foster younger brother of the cunning Aryan Brahmins.

Govindrao : The cunning Aryan Brahmins had forbidden the Shudras to learn Sanskrit all these years. They had also denied the childern of the Ati-Shudrās even admission to the (primary) schools. Because of these two bans, they (the Māngs and Māhars) could not be qualified (could not secure the educational qualification) for the posts of even the lowest grade clerks in the Mamlatdar's office. This is an authentic fact.

Jotirao : Under the impartial rule of the English Government, there is an opportunity for all the Māng and Mahār children to avail themselves of education. Let us imagine that all of them become educated. Let us further imagine that all of them join hands (unitedly) and somehow persuade the former Governor-General *Lord Ripon* and Mr. Hunter to appear before Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and if they, then, cross-question

these two worthies as follows : "The cunning Aryan Brahmins had totally forbidden us to take education all these years. If you do not allow us to be educated (so long as we are not qualified to hold high offices), and at the same time if you appoint the cunning Aryan Brahmins to high and responsible administrative posts under the Government, would the Brahmins not try their utmost to suppress and condemn us to the meanest level (position) in society ? If such a pointed question were to be put to these two high English dignitaries they would be hard-pressed to give any satisfactory answer (explanation, justification) to our question."

Govindrao : Not being able to give a satisfactory answer, both the high English dignitaries would be forced to hang their heads in shame (before Queen Victoria) and as they remember the hypocritical impostor from Poona [the 'enlightened re-prensentative of the Public (Social) Organisation there] they will heartily curse him (for having misguided them). They would have no other alternative at all. Now, what next ?

Jotirao : There can not be a 'Nation' worth the name until and unless all the people (nationals, inhabitants) of the land of King Bali—such as the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās, Bhils (tribals) and fishermen etc. become truly educated, are able to think independently for themselves and are *uniformly unified* and *emotionally integrated.* If (a tiny section of the population like) the upstart Aryan Brahmins alone were to found the '*National Congress*' who will take any notice of it ?

Govindrao : So first the schools should be started near the localities of the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās. And even then if they do not send their children to those schools, then it would be reasonable to suppose (expect) that these upstart Aryan Brahmins should gather these (unfortunate) children in their arms and should carry them to the schools.

Jotirao : The Aryan Bhats had forbidden the Shudrās to learn Sanskrit and banned the entry (admission) of the Ati-Shudrās into the schools all these years. If the Bhats repent their folly and were (magnamimous enough) to do so, or even if the very grand-father of their imaginary *Bramhaji* (Bramhadev) were to gather the children of the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās in His arms and were to carry them to the schools, even then I dare declare that, the cunning Aryan Brahmins will not be exonerated (freed from the stigma) from the heinous crime committed by them in the past. (You must realise that) *learning* (*scholarship, wisdom*) *is never hereditary.*

Govindrao : Formerly (in the initial stages) our English Govern-ment had entrusted the (important) work of imparting

instruction (education) to all the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās to the cunning Aryan Bhats/Brahmins. Though our impartial English Government has allowed free access to (schools and to education) to childern belonging to all the castes and communities, I have never found or have never heard any reports that the children of the Ati-Shudrās have been properly educated and have become scholars, and that they have become high (responsible) officers in the Government services. What may be the reason for this lamentable state of affairs ?

Jotirao : Though the English Government has allowed children of all castes and communities free access to education (right of admission to the schools), it has ignored one important aspect (one important reform)/that is, it has not taken any steps to (has not made any arrangements) prepare (train) the teachers belonging to the Ati-Shudrā communities. Has the gullible (simple, unsuspecting) English Government given any careful thought to this cardinal problem that the children of the Ati-Shudrās will never be trained properly (they will never be enabled to become wise or learned) by these Bhat/Brahmin teachers who profess and follow the taboo-ridden and iniquitous Aryan (Hindu) faith. And hence they will never become high (responsible) Government officers. (I say this because) the biased and prejudiced sacred Scriptures of the Aryan Brahmins contain strict regulations to the effect that the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās should never be allowed to take (the healing balm of) education, under any circumstances. And I declare confidently that the cunning and merecenary Aryan Brahmin teachers who have become educated to earn a sinful livelihood (to feather their own nests at the cost of others) will never train the children of the Ati-Shudrās in the villages properly—and hence they will never become good scholars (or truly educated).

Govindrao : It is observed that there is a great partiality (favouritism) in the functioning of the Education Department of the English Government. That is why though the children of the cunning Aryan Brahmins, when properly educated, do not easily secure appointments to high (responsible) posts in the Military service, they capture almost all the posts in the other Government Departments. (The Government Departments are flooded with them). On the other hand, the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās, being ignorant, do not understand the concept of freedom (do not know what 'freedom' is). I have now come to understand full well (completely) how the cunning Aryan Brahmin Officers must have exploited and persecuated these poor, ignorant Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās all these years. But I would like to know if the common man (Shudra and Ati-Shudra) was able to enjoy (exercise full control over) his property (rights) which he had acquired by the sweat of his

own brow, during the regime of the Aryan Brahmins (during the Peshwā rule)—which followed the iniquitous tenets of the *Vedās and Smritis*–their spurious Scriptures)?

Jotirao : Formerly, during the regime (rule) of the Aryan Brahmins (the Peshwā rule) if a (brave) Shudra were to rescue the lives of his Brahmin master along with all the members of the master's family, at great personal risk to himself, the Brahmin master would *manumit* (free) the brave Shudra [from his thraldom (slavery) to him] out of sheer gratitude to him. No sooner was the Shudra thus freed, when an upstart Aryan Brahmin (Nagyā by name) promptly captured (enslaved) him, and he would force him to work as his slave, as though he had an unchallenged right over him (to be used as a chattel). It is recorded in the *'Manu-Smriti'* that the Aryan Brahmins had an unfettered right to enjoy the property of the Shudra to his heart's content, during a (severe) famine : Nay, more. If an insolent and arrogant Aryan Bhat/Brahmin violated the modesty of (raped) the (duly wedded) wife of a Shudra, the Brahmin had to pay a nominal fine of Rs. fourteen only (by way of reparations). On the other hand, if an unusually sexually aggressive Aryan Bhat/Brahmin female forced herself on a Shudra male (were to seduce him), then that amorous Brahmin female was let off completely (was completely exonerated), molten lead was poured down the throat of the (unfortunate) Shudra male and, his genital organs were mercilessly cut off.

Govindrao : I am ashamed (I hang down my head in shame) even to hear about the atrocities perpetrated by the cunning Aryan Brahmins upon the hapless Shudras and Ati-Shudrās whom they had subjugated (in wars, once upon a time).

Jotirao : It is but natural that you should feel like hanging down your head in shame when you hear accounts of how the Aryan Bhats/Brahmins persecuted and exploited the (hapless) *Shudrās* and *Ati-Shudrās,* because you have come to acquire your *human* dignity and *human rights* under the rule of the compassionate and kind-hearted English Government. But (it is a fact) that the ancestors of the cunning Aryan Bhats—Brahmins were not ashamed of themselves at all, when they prepertated innumerable atrocities and crimes upon the (unfortunate) ancestors of the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās of our times. (What is shocking is that) the present descendants of these very (cruel) Aryan Bhats/Brahmins are not ashamed of themselves at all to resort to deceitful practices to exploit and persecute the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās of the present day with regard to their spurious (bogus) religious rites and political affairs (matters). This clearly proves how totally bereft of

humanity (human compassion, human sentimants) these Aryan Brahmins are.

Govindrao : Dear Tatyasaheb (What is done is done!) What was done by the Aryan Brahmins in the distant past cannot now be undone. What should they do now by way of atonement?

Jotirao : There is only one remedy for their sins. All the Aryan Bhats Brahmins regard themselves shamelessly as the *earth-gods*. If they genuinely repent for this crime, and if they search for the (eternal) Truth and if they sincerely try to follow the path of the Truth (if they genuinely worship the Truth and try to translate it into actions), then (and then) only will the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās, and the Bhils (tribals) and the fishermen etc. will not take revenge upon them for their past and present crimes committed against them, but will certainly *forgive them* (*magnanimously*).

Govindrao : One more thing, Sir, all the human beings in the wide world say in one voice to the Aryan Bhats/Brahmins "Fie upon you!" (i.e. they detest and pour ridicule upon them). So what should the Aryan Brahmins do about this?

Jotirao : When all the Aryan Bhats/Brahmins will discard (throw away) their *spurious, wicked, bogus Scriptures* (religious books) and when they will begin to behave in a truthful manner (when they will follow the path of the *Truth* in their dealings with) towards all human beings (all men and women), then all the men and women in the wide world will bow down reverently before the benevolent Creator of us all, and will pray unto Him fervently for the welfare and happiness of the said Aryan Bhats/Brahmins (who were their erstwhile tormentors) *undoubtedly* (I have no doubt about it). I am conscious of the fact that I have taken an inordinately long time in expatiating (explaining at length) this vitally important subject. So I beg leave to conclude it (at this stage).

THE TRUTH (Chapter 19) of the Book

" The Universal Religion of Truth "

Ganapatrao Daryaji Thorat : Who are the votaries or followers of the Truth?

Jotirao Govindrao Phule : (1) Our Creator has created all human beings. All men and women are by birth independent, and are entitled to enjoy all due *human rights.* Those who accept this view are the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(2) Our Creator has created the Sun (Solar system) and the stars and planets of the galaxy in the vast void. He or she who does not venerate or worship any of these, or a freak star or any stone or metal icon as the true Creator—should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Trath.*

(3) Our Creator has created all things in this world. Those who do not allow all human beings to enjoy all these things so created, but dedicate or offer them all to the Creator, a useless exercise, and who do not recite His name—an empty ritual—should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(4) Those who allow all human beings to enjoy all the (good) things created by our Creator and who also allow them to thank and glorify the Creator—should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(5) Those who do not trouble any human beings created by our Creator (in His goodness) unnecessarily, should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(6) Our Creator has graciously bestowed *all human rights* on all men and women, without any distinction. No particular man or a group (gang) of men has any right to oppress any human being. Those who do not so oppress their fellow beings should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(7) Our Creator has bestowed full religious and political autonomy (freedom) on all human beings. So nobody is justified in troubling other persons. Those who respect other persons' rights scrupulously and do not trouble o'hers in any way should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(8) Our Creator has created all human beings. Each woman will choose one man as her husband, and each man will choose one woman as his wife. Barring such legitimate instances (cases, examples), if all men and women behave towards all other human beings as brothers and sisters, they should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(9) Our Creator has given all human beings full freedom to express, to write down and to publish (propagate) their personal opinions and views regarding the human rights (which he has so kindly bestowed upon them all). Those who take scrupulous care not to harm other human beings while exercising the above-mentioned freedom in their personal lives should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(10) Those who accept this (divine) dispensation of our Creator, and who do not look down upon and do not oppress other human beings in respect of their (different) religious or political opinions or views, should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(11) Those who accept the view that our Creator has endowed all human beings with the requisite capacity to hold (and enjoy) any position of authority in matters of religion, or village administration or revenue administration, in consonance with their innate ability and capability, should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(12) In accordance with the dictates of our Creator, all human beings have rights regarding matters of religion, or village administration or revenue administration—such as their freedom (to enjoy these rights), their property, their defence and their protection from being oppressed. Those who do not hamper these rights should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(13) Such men and women as take proper care of their parents in their old age and honour duly other senior (aged) worthies or those who honour such people duly (as mentioned in the previous clause) should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(14) Those men or women who do not consume narcotics such as opium or heroin or who do not imbibe wine (as per the direction of the doctors) and who do not commit any acts of injustice (to others) or who do not give any quarter to those who indulge in such habits, should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(15) There may be men or women who may have occasion to destroy vermin like lice, bed—bugs etc, or scorpions, reptiles like snakes, and ferocious animals like wolves, tigers and lions, as also greedy men who may murder other human beings, or suicides. Excepting persons in this category, those men or women who do not kill their fellow-beings or do not give aid and comfort to such murderers should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(16) Those men or women who do not tell lies either for their own selfish ends or to harm the interests of others and who do not assist liars should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(17) Men or women who do not indulge in immoral acts or who do not treat with respect persons indulging in such acts should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(18) Men or women who do not commit theft of any kind, or who do not help such thieves should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(19) Men or women who do not set fire to others' dwellings or belongings, or who do not befriend persons doing such acts should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(20) Men or women who, for personal gains, do not rebel against the princes (of Indian States) ruling over their subjects in a just manner, or against any other justly constituted administration, or against the officers or administrators (representatives) chosen voluntarily by the subjects, causing untold misery to lakhs of families, or who do not help persons so rebelling, should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(21) There are (selfish and crooked) persons who brag loudly that the religious Scriptures have been composed for the common weal of all the people in this world, but who keep them tightly under their own vicious grasp and refuse even to show them to other fellow-citizens. Men or women who do not trust such treacherous braggarts should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(22) Men or women who do not regard either themselves or their blood-relations or their own kith and kin or their own friends and companions only as pre-emient, sacrosanct or specially privileged *hereditarily*, and who do not regard other human beings as of mean lineage or as unholy—such persons should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(23) Men or women who, on the dubious authority of their spurious and wicked Scriptures, do not stigmatise other human beings as hereditary slaves (helots, thralls) or who do not pay respect to those who stigmatise others—should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(24) Men or women who, in order to perpetuate their own domination, do not discriminate against other people's children while imparting instruction to them in the schools, or who condemn persons so discriminating should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth*.

(25) Men or women who, while dispensing justice in Courts of law, award due punishment to the guilty in accordance with the canons of justice *impartially* and fairly, and who condemn those who act unjustly and partially in such cases, should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(26) Men or women who honour farmers or other artisans who earn their livelihood honestly, the hard way, and who pay respect to those who diligently help the farmers and allied classes, should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(27) Men or women who do not look down upon persons earning an honest livelihood by working as unskilled labourers under a cobbler (a Chamar), but who, moreover, praise persons aiding such artisans, should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(28) Men or women, who, without engaging in any useful activity, putting on spurious religiosity do not exploit the ignorant masses by threatening them with dire doom consequent upon the baleful influence of the inauspicious planets, and who also do not write spurious, wicked books the better to feather their own nests unjustly, should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(29) Men or women who do not deceive superstitious fools by posing to be (all-knowing) astrologers or as witch-doctors (or faith-healers) or who do not aid or abet such impostors should be desingated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(30) Men or women who do not pretend to be mercenary devotees to propitiate imaginary gods and who do not earn an unrighteous livelihood by engaging in ceaseless recitations only to fleece and exploit the ignorant folk or who do not honour persons aiding and abetting such exploiters—should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(31) Men or women who do not create dissensions among the ignorant folk in order to make an unrighteous living (livelihood) or who do not associate themselves even remotely with persons indulging in such irreligious practices should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(32) Men or women who do not discriminate against human beings created by our Creator or who do not make any (artificial) distinctions in their dealings with them regarding their food-habits or the mode of their apparel, but conduct themselves with pure hearts to them, should be designated as the votaries or followers of *the Truth.*

(33) Men or women who do not discriminate against human beings, but who are ever ready to help, to the best of their ability, lepers, physically handicapped persons or orphans, or honour those helping such persons should be designated as the votaries or followers of the *Truth*.

Ganapatrao : The above-mentioned (thirty-three) rules or commandments conclusively prove that our compassionate Creator has not compiled in book-form the rules of ideal conduct guiding human beings in their dealings with one another. Do you agree with this hypothesis?

Jotirao : Your point is well taken. Our Creator has created the majestic Solar system as also other planets and stars in the vast inter–stellar spaces–particularly the earth inhabited by human beings. Rather than feeling contented and happy about the way those human beings conduct themselves towards one another ideally–in consonance with the ethical rules and commandments laid down by Him, suppose He had been pleased to write a holy book or Scripture so that all the human beings inhabiting this earth should follow the strait and narrow path of *Truth*. In that (unlikely) event, He would surely have defined, impartially, the fundamental human rights of all men and women, without discriminating among them and He would have taken care to write that religious book or Scripture in a universal language which would have been understood by diverse people speaking diverse languages (all over the world).

Ganapatrao : Who, then, must have written the different religious books and Scriptures which wax so eloquent about the human rights of *men* only?

Jotirao : All these different religious books and Scriptures have been composed by *compassionate, philanthropic Saints,* in which they have tried to propound the rights of *men* only, as per the authors' perceptions.

Ganpatrao : This thought has just occurred to me. *Firstly,* in the *'Aryan religion'*, the Aryans have supplanted our universal Creator, and they presume to style themselves as the 'earth-gods' of the ignorant folk. *Secondly,* Jesus is called the Son of the Creator (of the Universe). And *thirdly,* in Islam, Muhammad is called the *Paigambar* (Carrier of the message, the Messenger) of our Creator. I shall be grateful to you if you will kindly enlighten me on all these (abstruse) points.

Jotirao : *Firstly,* the Aryans presumed to be Vedantic experts on the authority of their wholly illogical, philisophical arrogance (deceitfulness), rendered our Creator redundant, and subsequently supplanted Him. They further grew all—powerful and have become the 'earth--gods' of the ignorant, defeated folk

(in India). *Secondly, Jesus,* in the evangelism preached by him about the Creator regarded him as the (kind) Father of us all, and instructed them, with a great hope, for the redemption of his ignorant brethren. That is why all the Christians revere him as the *Son* of *God* and also as their Saviour. *Thirdly, Muhammad* has recorded in the *Holy Quran* many details about the Creator's powers (authorities, officers). The kernel of his preaching, as presented there, highlights the fact that our Creator has sent *Muhammad* into the world to lead all mankind to the path of righteousness. He used to preach this philosophy to all people openly and forcefully. That is why all the Muslims belonging to the *Shiya* and *Sunni* Sects–regard him as the Paigambar or the Messenger (Carrier of the Message) of our Creator.

Ganapatrao : Dear Tātyāsaheb, you say that all these Scriptures, (religious books) were written by holy men. I would like to know if any holy woman has written any Scriptures.

Jotirao : If a holy woman had written any Scripture, then men would not have been able to ignore the due rights of women and they would also not have waxed so eloquent about their own rights. If women were learned enough, then men would never have been able to be so partial and deceitful.

Ganapatrao : If these great and holy men have propounded some facts of Truth in their religious books (Scriptures) regarding the rights of men, then why are their followers so deeply divided among themselves?

Jotirao : The reason of these deep divisions among them according to me, is as follows:—They do not think in an impartial and dispassionate (rational) manner about their own religion or about other (people's) religion, but hold (believe) obdurately and obstinately that their own religion has the monopoly of Truth. I am convinced that if all of us think impartially and dispassionately about our (different) religions, we would never be so foolish or rash to dub other people's religion as untrue (spurious).

Ganapatrao : Secondly, even though they think impartially and dispassionately about all the religions, then, how is it they are so antagonistic to one another? There is no valid reason for it.

Jotirao : That is because they do not take a balanced (impartial) view about the holy founders of the different religions as also about the logical deductions regarding the extent of truth reflected in the conduct of the ignorant followers of those religions.

Ganpatrao : If we accept your explanation, then it appears that people in ancient times were not as tolerant and accommodating as people in modern times.

Jotirao : Undoubtedly so. If the people in ancient times were as tolerant and accommodating as the modern ones, it stands to reason that they would never have condemned the Shudras and Ati-Shudras to the meanest level in society. They would also never have condemned the children of those whom they had vanquished on the battle-field to the status of *serfs, helots, slaves,* and forced them to serve them eternally in that capacity. It is a cruel fact that some people did exercise this wholly iniquitous right over the Shudras and hence their 'learned and saintly' authors dared not record this evil practice in any of their so-called Sacred Books. This fact proves that they (the Aryans) were of an *obdurate, uncompromising* and *vindictive nature.*

Ganapatrao : I grant that not even an uncultured, uncivilised barbarian would have dared record such a barbarous practice in his *religious books* or *Scripture.* I shall be grateful to you if you would kindly enlighten me upon the nature of the *Ideal Sacred Book.*

Jotirao : Men and women should not discriminate against one another (should treat others justly) irrespective of the consideration of their villages, or Presidencies, or Countries or Continents or irrespective of the religious beliefs which they profess, but they should regard themselves as *members of one world-wide family,* should behave amicably and in unison, observing strictly the truthful doctrine (path). Only thus can they please their Creator and become his dear children. Only such (virtuous) persons should be designated as the *votaries or followers of* the *Truth.* If all human beings had followed this noble principle and had been the votaries of the *Truth,* then, the deified Parashuram, (and his) minions the police, the judges and the guards in various prison-houses would have been rendered redundant (they would have been dispensed with).

Ganapatrao : I request you, Tatyasaheb, to give your final ruling (opinion) about the (ideal) religion to be followed by all the human beings in this wide world.

Jotirao : Dear Ganapatrao, all the Sacred Books (Scriptures) compiled by different holy persons do contain some element of Truth, as per their own perceptions and in consonance with the spirit of their times. *In that (ideal) family, the lady (of the house) may, if she likes, embrace Buddhism after studying the Buddhist religious scripture; her husband may embrace Christianity, if he likes (if he so chooses) after studying the Old*

and the New Testaments (of the Bible); their dauthter may embrace Islam if she so chooses after studying the Quran; and their son may embrace the Universal Religion of Truth, if he so chooses, after studying the 'Universal Religion of Truth (by Mahatma Phule—1891). And all these members of the family (the parents, the son and the dauthter) should lead peaceful lives, should never envy or hate the other persons' religion, and all of them should behave towards one another in a spirit of love and understanding, always bearing in their minds that they are the Creator's children, and hence are the members of (belonging to) the Creator's own family. By following this righteous path, they will, indeed, be the blessed citizens of our Creator's Kingdom.

Ganapatrao : That is enough (for me). If each one of those Sacred Books invariably contains some element of the *Truth,* then I am quite convinced that all the religions which are in vogue in this universe are the children of the *Universal Truth.*

Jotirao Phule : Now all of you should reflect deeply for yourselves whether the followers (votaries) of all the religions should bow down reverently before the *Universal Truth,* or the manner in which the *Universal Truth* should honour the followers (votaries) of all the religions (in the world). Let it be ! As all men and women have every right to conduct themselves towards others without hurting or harming them (in any way), (so, I exhort you all) to treat all men and women as your own brothers and sisters, without discriminating among them in any way so that you will be truly blessed in the eyes of our Creator (the Governor, the Ruler of us all!)

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Chapter (24) of 'The Universal Religion of Truth'
Vicious or Sinful Conduct

Laxman Manaji Patil : You have enunciated your hypothesis that when the Creator created all the creatures in this universe, He endowed the human beings only with the rational faculty (intellect), and thus sanctified them. Then how is it that some men and women in this world have become vicious or sinful?

Jotirao : Some human beings on the surface of this earth grew idle (indolent) and hence became vicious.

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Laxman : So, the Queen-Empress (Victoria) who reigns over this land of King Bali as the Supreme Authority should see that the children of her subjects who are directly under her charge do not grow idle (indolent). To that end in view, they should be imparted suitable instruction (eductation) at the appropriate time. If such education (training) is imparted to them, then the habits of juvenile delinquents and such other vicious and sinful types of conduct will be effectively checked and ultimately be uprooted completely.

Jotirao : My dear Laxman, I do not want even to mention the considerable amount of money that the Queen (i.e. her officers) collects by way of taxes levied on her subjects–the cultivators of the land. I want to put it to you that the benevolent Queen should spend the huge amount of taxes that she levies compulsorily on the ignorant farmers (cultivators) in this land of King Bali on opening schools for the children of the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās in our country. Instruction in agricultural bias and also in various trades relating thereto should be imparted to these children in these schools. But she (i.e. the English Govt.) should take especial care not to entrust the instruction and spending of the budget on the head of education to the false, hypocritical, religious impostors and brigands–i.e. the Aryan Bhats–all of whom are the castemen of the (retrograde Brahmin) Peshwā (of Poona), who elevate themselves to a self-styled high social pedestal, and who look down upon and condemn all other sections of society as mean and contemptible. If the amount earmarked for such education were to be entrusted to and spent by the English officers, do you think that such an arrangement would produce a greater number of juvenile delinquents from these schools than their present number (obtaining at present)?

Laxman : If the English Govt. will not appoint the above mentioned people–i.e. the Aryan Bhats/Brahmins as teachers in these schools meant for the children of the agriculturists

then I dare say that the students will *not* imbibe the habits of juvenile delinquents. Besides they will become more industrious and will cultivate many virtues (will be virtuous to boot). Further they will not be tempted to asscociate themselves with robbers and brigands like the Aryan Bhat (Vasudev Balwant) Phadke. They will not indulge in any anti-Govt. (rebellious) activities and I dare say, they will be able to pay more taxes to the Govt. cheerfully. For what other children should the Govt. open more schools, in addition to those for the cultivators' children?

Jotirao : In addition to the schools for the children of the cultivators in this land of King Bali, the benevolent English Govt. should open separate schools for the children of the artisans in our country–such as tin–smiths, iron–smiths, carpenters, shoe-makers, goldsmiths, tinkers, weavers, tailors–(i.e. people who were known as *'Balutdars'* and *'Alutdars'* in villages) and expend money on providing instruction to them regarding their own trades and related skills. If the Govt. takes such steps I assert confidently that very few of the children of the artisans who will be educated in these schools will become juvenile delinquents.

Laxman : Kindly tell me, out of which funds (earmarked for the ryots) should the English Govt. make provision for the expenditure to be incurred for opening such schools for the children of the artisans in this land of King Bali? I raise this query as the artisans do not pay the *'local fund'* to the Govt. as the cultivators do?

Jotirao : If this be the contention of the Govt. then I mus say that it is based on a misunderstanding. If need be, the Govt. should spend some amount out of the taxes that the cultivators contribute to the 'Royal Fund' of the Govt. and open some schools for the children of the said artisans. They will, then, be trained artisans (skilled in different trades) and they will be able, like the European and American artisans, to produce many agricultural implements–for ploughing, sowing, turning the soil, weeding, reaping and harvesting etc. for the use of the agriculturists in our country. As a result of this, the cultivators will be in a better position to pay more taxes to the Govt. In that way all the Kshatriyās (cultivators of the land) in this land of King Bali as also the English Govt. will rise in the estimation of the people, and the fame of the English Govt. will spread far and wide in the world.

Laxman : If the English Govt. open schools for the children of the cultivators and the artisans in our country, but if they, being misled and instigated by the cunning Aryan Brahmins (myth-vendors), do not send their children to these Govt.

schools, what steps should the English Govt. then take (to prevent such a situation)?

Jotirao : If the ignorant cultivators and the artisans persist in refusing to send their children to these schools opened by the Govt. specially for them, then the Govt. will be well-advised to compel them so to do by enacting a special legislation, making attendance at such *vocational schools* compulsory by law. Further, the Govt. Inspectors (pastors, evangelists) should try to advise and convince them as follows : 'If you do not send your children to the *vocational schools*, they will grow into idle and truant youngsters and they will be tempted to commit petty thefts to earn their sinful livelihood. The Govt. will, then, be compelled to arrest them, put them in fetters and will sentence them to long periods of rigorous imprisonment.

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If you do not take care to send your children to these (*vocational*) *schools* in good time, then, when they grow up, they will fall a prey to (will be misled by) the machinations of the cunning, false, Aryan Brahimn village revenue accountants (Kulkarnis) who are pastmasters in the art of litigation, and will bear false witness against innocent, god-fearing honourable worthies of the village, and will also fabricate false documents against them to earn a sinful living. And when they will be so hardened as to prepare counterfeit printed bonds and counterfeit currency notes against the established laws of the English Govt. and will be confirmed liars (perjurors), then the Govt. will be forced, willy-willy, to appoint salaried Judges to try their cases. Needless to say, the heavy burden of the salaries of these Judges will have to be borne by the (ignorant) cultivators and the artisans. In sum, if all the people in different countries of this world send their children to the schools, they will acquire the true and life-giving knowledge, and will, thus, become virtuous citizens. So, nations will not attack one another (out of greed, out of lust of power), and hence, the Govts. in these countries will not have to expend crores of rupees on maintaining huge armies unnecessarily, crores which are contributed by the cultivators and artisans to the State exchequers, by the sweat of their brows. Spread this gospel among all the people all over the world, and that will do the trick.

Laxman : Dear Tātyāsaheb, tell me—who is more culpable (guilty) than the robbers?

Jotirao : I have already explained, in some detail, about the sinful ways of the robbers, earlier in this treatise. There are people in various countries on the surface of this earth who

profess to be atheists, the better to serve their own selfish interests. They have (shamelessly) exiled (thrown overboard) the common Creator of us all and they have the temerity to ensconce themselves in place of the Creator, and style themselves as the earth-gods holding sway over the ignorant populace (the Shudrās and Ati Shudrās) whom they had vanquished in the battle. They further condemn them as mean and contemptible. The children (of these Aryan Bhats) educated and indoctrinated as (so-called) scholars in the schools of these cunning and villainous people have developed (graduated) into confirmed, hardened, heartless robbers indeed!

Jotirao The ignorant, helpless thieves commit thefts as they are famished for food. But there are many educated atheistic thieves who seek Government service and who receive monthly salaries as also the travelling allowance for using the horse-carriage. They do not discharge their duties as Government servants, and do not hesitate to receive bribes (illegal gratification) from the ignorant ryots while deciding their cases (in civil courts). But though taboo-ridden shamelessly they try to show off their religious piety and belief in the existence of God (theism) which is just a pretence (hypocrisy).

Laxman : Let us not bother about the shameless, taboo-ridden Brahmin Government servants who receive illegal gratification from the ignorant ryots. Let them enjoy themselves (suffer hardships) as prisoners in Government jails. But (what is most objectionable is that) some of these taboo-ridden people manage to capture the posts of Honorary Magistrates under the Government with a double purpose—to deceive the Government Officers, and also to show themselves off to the ignorant populace. What is your frank opinion about these persons?

Jotirao : Many of them do not possess enough educational qualifications for their status (as Hon. Magistrates) and are most inexperienced in the ways of the world (i.e. they do not possess common sense). These non-matriculate, ignorant dunces are appointed as Honorary Magistrates—their sole qualification for the posts being that they are the sons of high-class aristocrats (noblemen). Many of them cannot manage even their household affairs, nor can they take proper care of their own wives and children. How can such ignorant (and incompetent) persons dispense justice to their ignorant Shudra compatriots? .....They take an especial pride in flaunting their high-class superiority,- a hollow thing,-and at the same time look down upon and condemn all the people belonging to the other castes—(i.e. the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās) as mean and contemptible. So you cannot blame these Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās stigmatised as 'lesser breeds' by the Aryan Brahmins if they (the

Shudrās etc.) express their condemanation (hatred, detestation) regarding the sort of justice that may be meted out to them, from the very housetops.

Laxman : In the same manner, all superannuated pensioners (self–styled scholars these!), the mischief–mongering village revenue accountants (Kulkarnis) and the barely literate Patils (the village headmen) act as the honorary arbiters(magistrates). What is your view (opinion) about them?

Jotirao : These mischief-mongering village revenue accountants (Kulkarnis) easily pocket(manage to manipulate) the superannuated Government pensioners(who are as old and decrepit as the cattle in the ' Pānjrāpol ' (a charitable institution where the old, infirm and non-working cattle are taken care of by the Government) and the barely literate Patils–(village headmen), disregard them completely, look down upon and condemn āll other sections of the populace (the Shudras and Ati-Shudras) as mean and contemptible, and flaunt their own high-class superiority unashamedly. How difficult it must be for the ignorant populace to hope to get any justice at the hands of these (mischief-mongering) Kulkarnis who hate and envy everyone else in the world. Their welfare also is in danger.

Laxman : If young or old educated persons become members of a Municipality (Municipal Council) in an honorary capacity (without taking any honorarium from the Government) do the other sections of society (other castes) benefit by this? What is your view about this?

Jotirao: Laxman, is there a single member in all the Municipal Council(s) from the sections of the populace who were traditionally regarded as mean and contemptible by the cunning Aryan Bhahmins during their rule (hegemony) such as a Chamar (shoe–maker),—a cobbler, a Mahar, a Mang etc.? Kindly give me a single illustration, if any.

Laxman : There is not a single Shudrā or Ati-Shudrā member of the Municipal Council at all, regarded as mean and contemptible by the Aryan Brahmins deceitfully, as none of them had the basic (minimum) educational qualification for being a member of the said Municipal Council—so far.

Jotirao : From this it is clear that *Lord Ripon*, the English Governor–General who was too clever by half (who was a wiseacre) did not seriously apply his mind to the condition of (the problem of) the Ati-Shudrās who were regarded habitually as mean and contemptible by the Aryan Brahmins (for centuries). On what basis (authority, foundation) did the Governor-General introduce the reform of Local Self–Government in India and allowed the people of the land of King Bali to participate in it? Formerly, the English Government (i.e. the

Municipal Commissioner) was discharging the functions of a Municipal Council. Under the new Local Self-Government Act the said power (authority) has been transferred (delegated) by the Government from itself to the Municipal Council which is composed of members from all the castes (communities) here. Consequently, the high English dignitaries like the District Collector(of Poona) do not feel like paying any attention to the civic problems of our city (Poona) at all. Due to the criminal negligence of the Municipal Councillors, the Municipal Health Officer has been grossly negligent regarding the functioning of the sweepers and the scavengers (in the Sanitation Department) of the Municipality. He is reckless in spending the Municipal funds on this amenity. The insanitary conditions in the Ganj Peth (Mahatma Phule's house was situated in this Peth) are perfectly scandalous (so scandalous that they reek to the very welkin). They must be seen to be believed. The factory sense of a mere passer–by would be offended instantly. Everyone will be nauseated and disgusted by the mere scandalous sight (of the filth and stench)*. The poor vegetable vendors could not afford to pay the rent of a new stall in the Lord Reay Market. So they used to sell their vegetables in the old vegetable market. The Municipal authorities thought that Mahatma Phule was instigating these vendors. So the health officer of the Poona Municipality, decided to take revenge on Mahatma Phule. At his instruction, the scavengers collected the nightsoil from the Vetal Peth, Meeth Ganj Peth etc. and dumped the carts containing the nightsoil very near the residence of Mahatma Phule in Meeth Ganj Peth. The stench was infernal. It was difficult even to breathe the air. People literally shut the doors and windows of their houses to keep out the unbearable stench. Mahatma Phule says " May the accursed Bhat be damned in this Municipality! The poor people are constantly harassed by it. Please do not even mention the name of Poona Municipality) to me. (I abominate it)" (From the weekly ' *Deena-Bandhu*' dated 5th December 1886–edited by Shri K.P.Bhalekar, Poona. (Quoted in *Mahatma Phule* by Pandharinath Sitaram Patil-1927.p.105).

Even if the hired pony is persistently goaded with a sharp prick by the person who hires it, it will still not trot properly on the road (but would stray from the path). (Mahatma Phule is castigating the Health Officer and his hirelings in the Sanitary Department). So (I feel that) the only sure remedy for this nauseating wrong is that the Ati- Shudrā farmers should take proper education (be properly educated), should flourish the whip-cord in the air and lash these errant hired ponies soundly till they release(throw off) their droppings.

*Mahatma Phule was a true friend of the down-trodden. He always championed their cause.

Laxman : Who are more guilty than those who fabricate false papers (bonds) and indulge in telling blatant lies?

Jotirao : Those who prepare (write, compose) counterfeit untruthful) religious books—the products of their own fertile imaginations (i.e. imaginary, fictitious) in the name of the Common Creator of us all, with a view to robbing the ignorant Shudras and allied classes. Thus they maintain their children in a sinful manner.

Laxman : What corrective steps should we, then, take (to prevent such actions)? It would be very nice if you would kindly enlighten us on it.

Jotirao : The potent remedy for this is as follows:–All the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās as also our other compatriots such as the Bhils (tribals), the fishermen etc. who have been traditionally codnemned as mean, ignoble and insiginificant by the Aryan–Bhats/Brahmins for centuries, should send their sons and daughters to the (Govt). schools where they will begin to learn (imbibe) the tenets of the true (universally valid) knowledge. When, in due course of time, (in the fulness of time) when all our sons and daughters will be properly educated(will be truly initiated) in the tenents of the true (universally valid) knowledge a saintly character will arise from among the ranks of the Shudras and other allied classes, who will strew flowers (burn incense) over the graves of us all and will truly sanctify and glorify our names. I prophesy thus (this blessed event) with my heart brimming over with joy and grateful thanks!

A Warning

It should be remembered that though (Mahatma) Jotirao Phule has not menioned Justice M.G. Ranade specifically in this booklet, Jotirao wrote this booklet to refute Justice Ranade's views. The first B. A. Examination of the University of Bombay was held in April 1862. Mr. Ranade secured a brilliant First in that examination and hence Ranade's admirers used to call him as ' the prince of graduates '. Jotirao has damned him with faint praise in the following words—

> ' The first owl among the Aryan Brahmins' and ' parading himself as an honourable gentleman and though a resident of Poona, resides in Bombay and is a garrulous, gratuitous preacher '. There is another Aryan Brahmin who presumes to be a second (learned) Shankarāchārya and who also preaches loudly in diverse public meetings and Conferences that the Shudra peasants ' condition is much better than what it was thirty years ago '. This critical reference was also to a well-known speech of Ranade.

Ranade delivered a speech on the ' Condition of Agricultures ' (in India) under the auspices of the Debating Society of Poona in which he opined that the condition of the agriculturists at present was fairly good. The farmer gets a good price for his corn in the market and many other improvements have taken place (in agriculture).' He further went on to observe—' The agriculturists' condition had deteriorated when there was a bad famine about ten years ago, but their condition to-day is much better than what it was thirty years ago '. (N. R. Phatak ' A Life of Justice M. G. Ranade '—1924 pp. 373-374); Ranade had also praised (commended) the hereditary land-owning class as they served a useful purpose in society. (Mahatma) Jotirao Phule took strong exception to this exposition of Justice Ranade. Jotirao has criticised the views of Ranade in strong terms in this booklet " A Warning ".

Dr. Y. D. PHADKE.

[Introductory Note to ' A Warning ' in the " Collected Works of Mahatma Phule " (in Marathi)—Fourth Ed. 1991].

INTRODUCTION TO 'A WARNING'

The first owl among the Aryan Brahmins, parading as a gentleman, and though an inhabitant of Poona, prefers to stay in Bombay, presumes to proffer shallow advice to the learned H.H. (Sayajirao) Gaekwar of Baroda that caste-distinctions among us do not at all hinder our desired goal, nor does it come in the way of our national advancement. We are not at all surprised at this empty cunning wisdom of those self-styled (garrulous preachers) who hate the Shudrās and Ati-Shudras with all their hearts'. When the pernicious caste-distinctions will disappear, the Ati-Shudrās will condemn in no uncertain terms, the (devilish ban) imposed by the Aryan Brahmins, on their taking education. Once they become educated, they will come to know the evil designs and deeds of the Brahmins and hence will not deign to touch their cunning, wicked books with a pair of tongs. The Shudrās will not pay respect to the Brahmins who style themselves as the most worthy of respect among the eighteen Varnās. They will also not entertain them (the Brahmins) with sumptuous feasts gratis (they who are no better than mere manual workers). They will never respect the — Brahmins who play on the ' Tabla ' nor would they salute them as they trade in lies. There is another Aryan Brahmin who presumes to be a second (learned) Shankarāchārya and who also preaches loudly in diverse meetings and Conferences that the Shudra peasants' condition is much better than what it was thirty years ago. We are astounded at his temerity. Our English Government has collected lakhs of rupees from the tillers of the soil by way of taxes (cess) and have expended the said amounts of money on the education of the Bhats/Brahmins. But (we are pained to state) that all this has been a huge waste of money (it has served no useful purpose). The vindictive Aryan Brahmins have been practising a shameles tyranny in diverse ways for thousands of years, under the garb (or pretext) of their spurious, wicked religion concocted by them(to accomplish their nefarious objects). Thanks to the researches of some philanthropic English scholars and also to the education (preaching) imparted to the Shudrās by the preachers sent to this unfortunate country by many benevolent European(English) and American people at great personal cost to themselves, there has been a slight improvement in the condition of the ignorant Shudra farmers here. The said savant (the Second Shankarāchārya) is ashamed to admit openly that the religious tyranny practised by the Brahmins on the Shudra peasants has lost some of its severity(sting.) So he says vaguely that the condition of the Shudra peasant has improved somewhat

during the last thirty years. These crafty Brahmins use the simple unadorned language of the unlettered Shudra peasants to convince(futilely) the ignorant (unsuspecting) Governor--General and other high-ranking officers and try to save their face somehow.

Have any of the Brahmin women or Bhahmin children ever experienced the agony of toiling on the farms, in the burning sun, on an empty stomach, like the Shudra women or the Shudra children? Has any Bhat/Brahmin ever soiled his hands by carrying baskets of night-soil on their heads and deposting the same near the trunks (roots) of trees (as manure)? His fraterual caste-men grab about Rs twenty per day by way of alms (gifts) of a cow, the amount earned by the Shudra farmers by the sweat of their brows and they squander these alms in entertaining women of easy virtue. It is very strange that all the Bhats/ Brahmins are uniformerly silent about this (evil practice of their caste-men!).

The above--mentioned contention of the so-called learned (Brahmins) is like saying that the economic condition of the present day Bhils, fishermen, Māngs and Mahārs is better than that of the nomadic Brahmins who, in ancient times, were moving about the forest tending herds of cattle, donning clothes made out of the tree-barks, living in huts and subsisting on the wild roots of plants and trees? (It is patently absurd!) These cunning (so-called) learned Bhats/ Brahmins practise their roguery in diverse ways) on the ignorant, poor, Shudrās and AtiShudrās(and fleece them systematically!) It is our intention to bring this deplorable state of affarirs to the notice of our poor Shudra and Ati-Shudra brethren as also (the rapacious) Brahmins(in a lightning flash, as it were). Hence we have entitled this booklet as a *'Warning'*

JOTIRAO GOVINDRAO PHULE.

1st October 1885.

A WARNING

" A person who has sustained an injury to his body alone will know what physical pain is. How can any other person know it, O ignorant (rustic) one?"

If we think carefully about the condition of India in general, we soon realise that many foreign powers (people) invaded this (fair) land of ours. The foreign invaders did precious little for the comfort and happiness of the Shudrā and Atishudrā subjects here. Nothing was done (by them) for the prosperity and advancement of this land. The first to invade India were the Iranians (people from Iran) who are now called (known all over India as) Aryans or Brahmins, and who conquerred this land and established their rule (supremacy) here. The illustration of Parashuram's victory and rule over India should be sufficient (testimony). The Aryans, then, framed and promulgated totally unjust and immoral laws and regulations and codified them under the name of ' *Manu-Samhita* ' (*Manu-Smriti*). These laws were framed arbitrarily and always keeping in view the selfish interests of the Aryans. They invested these 'laws' with the authority of a sacrosanct religion to give it special prestige and dignity. They succeeded in enforcing these iniquitous laws on the Shudrās and Atishudrās here who were drowned in the vast ocean of murky ignorance. Later on, the Moslems (the Afghans, the Mughals etc.) invaded this country. The Dutch, the Portuguese, the French also attacked India (in the 18th Century). But these invasions were not of much significance as they could establish their hold on a few pockets (areas) of India and their rule lasted here only for a brief period of time. They did not leave any imprint on the people here. Just as they did not harass the people, they did not take any steps to benefit the people either in any significant measure. Of the above-mentioned foreign invaders only two—the Aryans and the Moslems harassed the peoples—the Subject—here (the word ' Subjects' signifies the Shudrās and the AtiShudrās of India here as also subsequently in this booklet). The invaders were indeed the embodiments of treachery, jealousy, cruelty and selfishness. In order to accomplish their thoughtless (and selfish) objects, they used their rule and power as sharp whips to lash mercilessly the poor, defenceless subjects whom they had subjugated. They were past masters in the art of torturing the subjects, as they did not take any steps to improve their lot (which would have ameliorated their condition). A cursory perusal of their history (in India) would reveal that they (the foreign invaders-) tortured the poor subjects in India in the following ways:—Sometimes they harassed and finally killed them mercilessly for petty or non-existent crimes (supposed

to be committed by them). Sometimes, they entertained carnal desires about the beautiful, high-bred, and virtuous women-folk of the conquerred people (and violated their modesty, or molested or outraged them) to satisfy their lustful (carnal) desires. For petty offences committed by the subjects, the foreign invaders used to torture them inhumanly, resulting in their deaths.

The punishments which they visited (inflicted) upon the poor people here were very strange, cruel and barbarous. A mere narration of these tortures would horrify the hearts of even the hardened among us. His heart would burst with pity for the victims and his hair would stand on end. How horrible is the punishment of condemning a man to death. The condemned preson is made to sit on a sharply pointed iron pillar, and he is thrust down the length of the column until its sharp point emerges out of his head which is the height of inhumanity! Sometimes the victim is thrashed severly with whip-lashes or with a slender bough of a tree until his skin is ruptured and he bleeds profusely. Then saline water or tamarind soaked in water is poured on the lacerated skin which causes excruciating pain to him, he writhes in great agony and finally succumbs to the pain. His tormentors derive sadistic pleasure in seeing him suffer his agonies. Sometimes he is hurled from the ramparts of a fort deep into the ravine below, or he is tied to the legs of an infuriated tusker (intoxicated with wine etc.) and the tusker is made to run on a rough, stony path (resulting in the victim's death) (Readers will please recall the inhuman death, inflicted upon the valiant, famous Vithojirao Holkar, in the manner described above, in Poona (on 16th April 1801) by the treach-evous, ungrateful Peshwā). Sometimes boiling oil or vermillion or lead was poured into the mouths of the victims which naturally resulted in their deaths. Blood-curdling punishments like those described above were inflicted on the poor, defenceless subjects for petty thefts or offences, out of sheer spite. Till recently, till the (ignominious) end of the rule of Bajirao Peshwa II the last of the infamous (notorious) line of the Peshwās, if farmers defaulted in paying the land assessment in time, they were made to bend down publicly (in front of the ' Chawdi ') with heavy stones placed on their backs, or sometimes their wives were made to sit on their bent backs and they were made to inhale the pungent, obnoxious smoke of chillies burnt under their faces. If we compare the tortures and punishments inflicted on the victims during the Peshwas' regime with those prevailing in other lands and regimes (we make bold to state that) the Peshwās' punishments would carry the palm any day. (If we reflect on these severe punishments dispassionately) we are forced to wonder whether the law-enforcing agencies

(authorities) who were the Peshwas' caste-men were constantly planning and meditating on diverse methods of torturing and harassing the poor subjects day in and day out. This was the one and only object of their constant study in devising such punishments. Their conception of punishing the subjects embraced various facets such as beating up or whip-lashing, maiming (their bodies), robbing or various ways of harassment (mental and physical). The subjects' unhappiness gave them (the Brahmins) untold joy and satisfaction. The Brahmin bureaucracy regarded the poor subjects as less than vermin or less than dumb animals (in the field). The poor subjects, according to the Bhat rulers, were specially created (by God) to serve the Bhat Peshwas and their caste-men as helots. These helots were supposed to till the fields and garner rich harvests, to weave clothes, to toil and moil in the burning heat of the sun, and to produce and supply diverse luxuries needed by the Peshwās and their caste-men, their women-folk and children too. So be it!"

The Omnipotent Almighty (God) dethroned the Peshwā and the evil coterie of his caste men (counsellors) who were intoxicated with the heady wine of power and hence were persecuting the poor subjects. It was a fit and proper nemesis for their notorious misdeeds and misrule. By divine dispensation, the English rule (or supremacy or raj) came to be established here, a rule which was at once *just* and *merciful, wholesome, beneficial, righteous* and *peaceful*–for the comfort and benefit of the long-suffering masses in India. The ryots are eternally grateful and beholden unto the all-merciful God–and they further pray to Him, "O Lord! May this regime last long! (We make this statement because) after the advent of the English raj (rule) here, the common people heaved a sigh of relief, for they were freed, at long last, from the inhuman oppression and tyranny (born of envy and jealousy)–religious, ethical administrative and diverse other manifestations (of the same).

These days, the subjects (under the English rule) are encouraged to do things that they like–which they think are in their best interests and which are not harmful to other people. Formerly, (under the Peshwa rule) the subjects' property was vulnerable to attacks by the robbers. They lived in constant dread of high Government Officers as also of the violent marauders (robbers–i.e. the Pindaris)–enjoying the patronage of the ruling class (Kings). Hence the people were unable to use the money they had earned the hard way for their own comforts, nor could they store it safely because of so many threats and difficulties. As a result of this, the common people lost all interest in life and became slothful, idle, and indigent (impoverished). Today a people's earnings are quite safe (which they

have earned the hard way). That is why they can spend them as they like, they can save them up, or can dispose of them as they like. In short, they are the undisputed masters of their earnings. That is why they have given up their slothful habits and are trying their best to acquire more and more money (for their own use). The (English) Government has introduced many good reforms for the welfare of the subjects, and are planning to undertake many new projects beneficial to the people at large. Formerly, travelling was a great ordeal for the people, because it was fraught with many dangers. The Government has now constructed new roads and provided safety to the travellers on their journeys. So travelling has became a joyful thing for them. The Government has contructed (new) bridges for the convenience of the people, have opened many new English schools, many hospitals, as also many caravanserais for the needy people. One can mention many more of such new conveniences. But there is one great project which the Government has undertaken which is truly beneficial to the people and which is commendable and eternally creditable to the Government. We need not highlight its importance to the common man. The good and valuable project undertaken by the Government holds forth a great hope and cheer before the people who have been afflicted with the curse of poverty all these years. That project concerns the bridging together (joining together) the many mountain–passes interspersed on the mountain–ranges in our land and constructing many vast lakes (percolation tanks). The Government is planning to construct many canals at different locations and to provide life-giving water, through them, to the needy farmers' lands enabling them to cultivate those lands through all the seasons (all the year round). The Government also intends to provide clean drinking water from these lakes to the thirsty subjects who were suffering all these years (for lack of drinking water). Such a vital amenity was overdue, and by God's grace, it has materialised now.

For more than a century the Bhat rulers have overburdened the poor subjects with unjust, heavy taxation, and thus have gobbled up crores of rupees (for their personal comforts), but they didn't have the goodness to spend even a farthing of this ill-gotten wealth for the welfare of the poor subjects, in all conscience. We are most ashamed to narrate the various ways in which the Bhat rulers have expended this huge amount of money. They established *temple–complexes* at different places for their own castemen and opened centres of free distribution of food (to them). As soon as the amounts of taxes were credited into the treasury, the Bhat rulers would issue prompt orders to donate Rs. two lakhs to temple-complex X, Rupees fifty thousand to temple–complex Y. The case of

the '*Parvati temple-complex*' (in Poona) was in a class by itself. Sweet cakes fried in wholesome ghee were served to the Brahmins and additional alms of Rs. ten per head were given to them every day. The next day, laddus were served and alms of Rs. twenty per head were given to them. The following day rice, scented with Keshar ('saffron') was served, and potfuls of alms were given to them. Two shawls each were given to the Brahmins on certain occasions, and sometimes turbans, pairs of fine-spun dhotis, and in some instances, handsome annuities also were given to some Brahmins. In this way the Peshwas squandered away and misused the amounts of taxes contributed by the Ryots by the sweat of their brows in showering such munificence in the form of sumptuous daily feasts and liberal alms and prizes to (undeserving) Brahmins, which caused a great injustice to and heart-burming among poor ryots.

(One may well ask) were the poor ryots quite well-off so as to afford to pay such (heavy) taxes to the (Brahmin) rulers? The answer is an emphatic 'No'. Words fail us to describe their miserable conditions. The poor Shudrās had to toil and moil on their farms throughout the year (in all the seasons-the hot summer, the drenching rains and the bitter winter). They could not afford even coarse clothes to cover their bodies, and coarse un-nutritive food to satisfy the pangs of biting hunger. A tattered narrow length of cloth about twenty-odd feet long, served to cover their heads with what was an apology for turbans. They covered their nakedness with tattered rough blankets all through the year. Their shoes (sandals, chappals) were cobbled up in many places and they used the shoes only in the summer months and would keep them safely in the attic to be used the next su mer. They went bare-footed through the remainder of the year. They could ill-afford a piece of cloth by way of a shirt. If they purchased anything in the market (grocery, vegetables etc.) they had to store it in their all-too inadequate piece of cloth (an apology for a shirt) or in their turbans. This, in brief, was the (miserable) condition of the ryots' dress (clothes).

We are most distressed to describe the clothes worn by the ryots' women-folk. They used to eke out their miserable existence (living) somehow, as their menfolk could afford them no joy or comfort. If they were lucky enough to get a very rough sari, worth Rs. two or Rs. two and a half, they had to make do with it for at least two years. They didn't have a spare sari. Being immersed in hard manual work (domestic chores and working on the farms), they had to wear the same rough unwashed sari for four or five days together. If they could snatch a few moments of leisure from their grinding routine of work, they used to repair to the river nearby, where they

washed their saris in parts (instalments), washing one half at a time, while retaining the remaining half on their bodies, to their great shame. In due course of time, the sari would be worn thread-bare. Then they would stitch up half the portion at one time and would attend to the other half at a later date. Later on, the sari would be so threadbare and tattered that the poor woman had to sew it up with multi-coloured patches (of cloth). As a result of this, one could not say, for certain, what was the original colour of the sari (which was really a patchwork quilt). Covering her body with such a tattered and patched-up piece of cloth and balancing a heavy basket of cow-dung cakes, she had to go to the public market. Alast ! Alas! How painful and sad is this condition!

The Shudrās must truly be heart-broken (their hearts must surely crack) while narrating the tale of woe to their friends. They will surely say–'Cursed be the day that we were born! It would have been much better if we had died at birth. We cannot bear the sight of our womenfolks' plight!' A man can bear intense physical agony with stoicism, but to bear the agony caused to their near and dear ones is surely beyond human capacity. He is smitten with pain and misery at his relatives' miserable plight. But the poor ryots are truly helpless in such a quandary. One can imagine what un-nutritive and unpalatable food they must be eating. They are forced to eat dry jowar, nachni (nagali) or bajra bread, leavened with salt or chillies or onions. His vegetables are cooked but he cannot afford the luxury of a bit of oil or salt or chilly-powder to garnish them at all times. Sometimes he is forced to eat a porridge (gruel) prepared from the roughly-ground flour of jowar or nagali. Sometimes he has to eat just boiled vegetables. Sometimes he has to make do with the jungle-berriest. Worst of all, he has occasionally to drink plenty of water (in lieu of food) strap his stomach with a legth of cord and do hard manual labour (on an empty stomach) the whole day on the farm.

To expend the money collected as taxes from the perennially poor ryots–the money earned by the sweat of the ryots' brows–on feasting their own caste-men (the Brahmins) is a flagrantly immoral practice. If the Bhat rulers had utilised a portion of the money, thus collected from the ryots, for constructing canals (for irrigation) or for any other projects beneficial to the people, and the rest of the money on fattening their idle caste-men, the people would have benefited by it considerably and would not have experienced the privations of scarcity of food and clothing. It would have been a feather in the Bhat rulers' caps. Had they provided irrigation facilities (by construcntig canals, as suggested above) to the ryots' farms, the farmers

would have reaped bumper harvests (in their farms) fairly regularly, and they would have been able to pay double or four-fold taxes to the Peshwas, who in turn would have been able to provide sumptuous feasts to still more Brahmins along with equally liberal monetary gifts to them. When the Brahmin mendicants were feasted with choice delicacies such as laddus etc. to the point of satiety, and if they still could manage to eat more laddu then they were rewarded with Rs. ten for every extra laddu eaten. If the farmers' lands were irrigated, the Peshwa would have been able to reward his voracious castemen with Rs. twenty or Rs. thirty per every extra laddu eaten. But such a thought did not occur to them, deluded as they were by sheer selfish considerations.

The ryots were adversely affected for want of irrigation facilities to their farms. Hundreds (nay, thousands) of them are still suffering great hardships for lack of the said facilities. (It is a universal truth that) the farmers in countries where such irrigation facilities are not available to them are greatly handicapped (in their agricultural operations). As they have to depend entirely on agriculture for their sustenance, providing such irrigation facilities is the only way to free them from the curse of poverty. Most people are aware of the fact that ample irrigation facilities are provided to their farmers by the English (British) Government in their own country (England), resulting in an all-round improvement in the econimic condition of their farming Community. H.E.H. the Nizam (of Hyderabad) has constructed canals in some areas of his (princely) State, with the result that the farmers in those areas are quite well-off (economically). As such irrigation facilities were not available to the farmers in our land, agriculture, their main-stay, suffered heavily. And as a result, the common peasant who was entirely dependent on his farm for his sustanance, was the worst sufferer in the past. Irrigation is the life and soul of agriculture. So, water is truly a life-giving gif to the peasant. In the absence of such a gift or facility, he inevitably goes to the wall. Give this facility to the tiller of the soil, agriculture will be a truly economically beneficial proposition to him, howsover rugged, fallow, or gravelly (stony) his farms may be. It is no exaggeration to say that given an abundant supply of water to his farm, be it ever so rocky or fallow or rugged, the peasant will be able to grow many fruit-trees and a variety of crops on his farm, even out of season (i.e. not restricted only to the rainy season). Take a tiny illustration. The lands round about the site where the Governor's palatial residence is situated i.e. at *Aundh,* were till recently thought to be unproductive, being barren, rocky and fallow–see what a miraculous transformation has taken place at the self-same spot now. The whole campus is full

of orchards, flowering shrubs as also of a wealth of other shrubs, herbs, trees etc. It has now been converted into a delightful vast garden, nay, a *veritable Paradise*. (It has to be seen to be believed). It would be difficult (nay, impossible) to find any other comparable garden even in black, alluvial soil in the vicinity of Poona. The creation of such a fine garden on so poor (rugged, unproductive) a soil (land) is truly wonderful. A little reflection will tell us the reason. Abundant water has been supplied to this otherwise barren plot of land, through pipes from the nearby river. Hard labour put in by the labourers is also responsible for this transformation, but that is not the chief cause. *Abundant supply of water is the key to this transformation.* This clearly proves how essential it is to supply water to the farmers for their agricultural operations, through an efficient system of irrigation. (Water, indeed, is truly life-giving)!

The farmers rightly believe that a plentiful supply of water is the key to their prosperity. (It is their true wealth). An assured supply of water ensures all happiness and luxury to them. If the rains fail them one year, it spells disaster for them. They are impoverished and they, along with all the members of their families, fall on evil days. Some of them have to leave their homes and migrate to other areas. Some are reduced to penury and are forced to beg (food) from door to door. Some are driven to suicide. I shall now deal with the reasons responsible for this wretched condition of the (Indian) farmers.

We see the operation of the law of Nature—that if one area gets an abudnant rain-fall, some other area is afflicted with drought. It is never uniform all over the country. That is why the farmers are faced with acute spells of drought every ten or fifteen years, resulting in the failure of crops. Then the farmer falls back upon the corn (grain) stored from the previous year's harvest. But that stock is barely sufficient to feed all the members of his family for six month at the most. When that is consumed, he has no money to buy even the seeds for the next sowing season. The adversity of the farmer is the golden opportunity for the Brahmin and the Marwari money lenders to fleece the poor farmer. They rejoice at the predicament of the poor, indigent farmer, with whom they ingratiate themselves with honeyed words. Some Brahmin money-lenders repair to his house and ask him solicitously—'Hallo, dear Patil! You seem to be deeply distressed. May I know the reason?. At which the poor farmer replies, "Sir, how can I explain my plight to you '? We had drought last year (which resulted in the failure of crops). So I was forced to fall back on the slender stock of grain which I had saved the year before that (two years back). Now I am totally 'broke' and the sowing season

is about to begin. I am at a loss to know how to tide over this crisis.'' At this, the (kind-hearted!) Brahmin money-lender assures him promptly, "Do not worry at all on any count. I shall gladly lend you ten or twelve Rupees. Go and purchase the seeds (and sow them in your farm)." The poor Shudra farmer is easily taken in by the Brahmin money-lender's sweet words' And, moreover, he is overwhelmed by his generous offer, coming from one who is a total stranger to him, and who has taken the trouble to come all the way to his (ramshackle) house to help him in his hour of dire need (with a loan of ten to twelve Rupees). The evil machinations of the greedy money-lender—(to lend him the money and) to deprive him of his house and his other chattels—does not cross his simple mind at all. But he is happy at the prospect of timely help in his dire need, and begs the money-lender to advance him the said loan of Rs. ten or twelve. The (wily Brahmin) money-lender says to him, "That's O.K. Please come back to me tomorrow, with a revenue stamp-paper (bond) and do not forget to bring with you some of your relatives as also the members of your family. Rest assured I shall help you in your hour of need. I hope you won't mind me asking you to come to me with a stamp-paper (bond) tomorrow. Please do not misunderstand me at all. I trust you completely. I am not one to doubt your credentials. Both of us belong to the same village, do we not ? Both of us profess the same religion (Hinduism). I would not dream of deceiving you (behave unjustly to you). You should have implicit faith in my goodness. If my intentions about you were dishonest, would I have come, of my on accord, all the way to your house, Patil, and offered to help you in all possible ways in your present predicament with a loan? Never! " He would ply his innocent mind with smooth, deceitful words, the better to pursuade him to execute the bond expeditiously. The unsuspecting farmer would, then, return to the Brahmin money-lender's house the next day with the required bond-paper. The money-lender would, then, get the Kulkarni to incorporate various unjust conditions in that bond, the Kulkarni being secretly in league with the Brahmin money-lender. He would, then, ask the poor Shudra farmer and the members of his family or his relatives to affix their thumb-impressions to the said bond. He would then, deduct Rs. two or three as the Kulkarni's fees for writing the said bond and would give Rs. nine or ten by way of a loan (instead of Rs. ten or twelve). In due course of time, the farmer would repay the amount of the loan, but the wily money-lender would charge him interest on the interest of the original loan, and a little later, a further interest on the aggregate amount (though the original loan was already cleared by the farmer). Just then the farmer's son was getting married. So the money-lender would advance a further petty loan to

the farmer and would force the farmer to execute a fresh bond to him for the new petty loan. The farmer was in no position to clear the debt.) So the money-lender would add the amount of interest to the original loan and get the farmer to execute a fresh bond. This (mal) practice continued for three to four years. During this period the amount of the original loan of Rs. 10/to Rs. 12/had swollen to Rs. 200/or Rs.250/-. The money lender would. then. file a suit against the poor farmer for repayment of an amount of Rs. 300/- to Rs. 325/-, would get an order passed against him in the court, and just at harvest time, would insist on executing an order of confiscation ('attachment') of his land (for non-repayment of the loan).

Alack the day! It is absolutely impossible to express in words the (harrowing) sight that meets one's eyes there. The poor, helpless and indigent farmer has toiled and moiled day and might, along with all the members of his family on his farm, throughout the year, bearing, semi-clad, the privations of hunger, in the burning heat of the sun, in pouring rain, and biting cold. Now, just when he is looking forward to the fruits of his labour (reaping a good harvest) when the (heartless) money-lender, along with his clerk and peon, appear before the farmer (in his courtyard). Just imagine the feelings of the poor farmer. No wonder, if the money-lender appears to the farmer and the members of his family as a veritable god of death (Yama) wreaking death and destruction all around-in all his terrifying manifestation-, with the clerk and the peon as his faithful, unfailing executioners, come there to strike them all dead. The terrified children's cries rend the air. The frightened womenfolk in the house begin to weep piteously and the crest-fallen and helpless farmer beats his breast and bursts into uncontrollable sobs. No wonder if they feel that a great catastrophe has befallen them. They pray to God, in their ntter heplessnes, "Dear Lord! We pray unto you that such a misfortune should never befall even our bitterest foe at any time." When the agents of the money-lender drag out his meagre stock of corn and his other belongings in the courtyard, the hapless farmer falls at the cruel money-lender's feet again and again, and humbly supplicates him to take pity on him, but to no purpose. The farmer's wife also beseeches him (the money-lender) most piteously, "Respected Sir! We have already repaid the amount of the principal along with the interest long back. But you have charged us interest on the interest of the principal (already repaid). We are most willing to repay even that amount (unjustly charged to our account). We would be most thankful to you if you could allow us some more time of grace (to clear the debt). Else, all of us will be put to a great

hardship, we shall be beggared, and (worst of all), these tiny children of ours, (barely two or three years old) will starve to death. You can see for yourself, Sir, that these our children are semi–naked (as we cannot afford to given them clothing), and we find it difficult to feed them properly. If you take away our meagre stock of grains, they will be greatly inconvenienced. To whom can they appeal for succour? Respected Sir, you appear to us to be the embodiment of compassion, forgiveness and peace. You are, indeed, the friend and champion of the helpless, and that is why you are called 'an earth–god.' So I appeal to you most earnestly and humbly (with folded hands and on bended knees) to take pity on our helpless children, and allow us to retain a portion of the food grains (that you are forcibly taking away from us now). It would be most unseemly and unbecoming of you to reject my request, out of hand, summarily." Having heard this entreaty of the farmer's wife, the money-lender was greatly incensed, and with blood–shot eyes, he said to her, "O foolish woman, how dare you, a Shudra, teach me (pontificate to me) about this? Do you mean to say that I should write off the debt and should not try to recover it from your husband reconciling myself to such a situation?" The poor woman could not challenge his words but had to keep quiet helplessly. The other members of the farmer's family also would beseech him humbly in that behalf. But the stony–hearted money–lender would not heed these entreatries, but would proceed to accomplish his wicked design by carrying away all his belongings (pots and pans, food grains etc.). He would then sell them to someone and would deduct the amount thus realised from the original debt. The remaining portion of the debt would continue to stand in the farmer's name, as before. The same old procedure of charging interest on the interest as also the remaining principal would continue to harass the farmer as before for four or five years to his great discomfiture for the loan of Rs. 8 or 10. He would lose his farm, his cattle, his well and the irrigated field therein, resulting in his total impoverishment. So great was his harassment and mental torture that he would be driven even to suicide. These Brahmin money–lenders had the temerity to destroy the poor farmer totally, even after recovering the full amount of the debt (principal) along with the interest thereon. If thy could inflict such an injustice on the poor farmer under the benevolent rule of the English Government, my readers can just imagine how they must have harassed the helpless peasant, during the Peshwās' rule, if he took a loan of a few Rupees from a Brahmin money–lender when the rains failed that year.

During the Peshwas' rule it was not necessary (for the Brahmin money–lenders and other Brahmin officers) to file suits against

the defaulting parties in the Government Courts, as the powers of the Government were exercised by the Brahmin officers at their own sweet will (arbitrarily). The money-lencers were free to belabour the tenants (debtors) and to deprive them of their possessions (food-grains and other belongings) by brute force. They would sell his cattle in the market, would torture the members of his family, resulting, sometimes, in their deaths. These cruel persecutors (Brahmin money-lenders) would place heavy stones on the debtors' heads or backs, and would, then, make them stand in the hot burning sun. Sometimes chillies were burnt under their faces so that the obnoxious fumes from the pungent chillies would enter his eyes and nostrils. Sometimes they would apply pincers to his genitals, or would tie their hands and feet, pass a wooden rod through the tied hands, and would continue to belabour them mercilessly. The Brahmin Officers in the revenue department would also torture them in diverse ways, as mentioned above, while collecting the land-assessment from them.

Many learned and progressive Aryan-Brahmins of these days are quite convinced about the tyrannical and oppressive rule of the Peshwas. But, for fear of their own castemen they can not muster enough moral courage to confess openly that the ignorant Shudra farmers have not been freed from the tyranny and oppression of the Aryan Brahmins (i.e. the Peshwas). There are some aplogists of the Peshwa rule, who, for the sake of expediency, make brave speeches in public meetings (organised by the newly-formed Society-the '*Sarvajanik Sabha*') 'the People's Organigation—founded in 1870 in Poona) to the effect that the condition of the Shudra farmers has improved considerably during the last thirty years. It is a fact that the English rule has benefited us all, particularly the masses), but these orators conveniently ignore this salient fact, and try to emphasise minor drawbacks and shortcomings incidental to the new administrative machinery (they try to magnify those drawbacks by holding them under a miscroscope). There are some Aryan-Bhats (Brahmins) who profess most orthodex views and who are most partial to their own caste-men (the apologists of the Peshwa rule), are trying to invest the said Peshwa rule with feigned and imaginary virtues. It is these people who declare from the house—tops these days,—"The lot of the Shudra farmers under the Peshwa rule was extremely comfortable. We can not describe it in words. We do not find even a fraction of that comfort and happiness in the life of the Shudrās these days (under the English rule). The standard of life of the Shudrās under the Peshwā rule, their way of life, their customs and social traditions were very fine indeed! The Shudrās, then, were eminently

distinguished for their truthfulness, righteousness, probity, rectitude and religious piety. The Shudrā ryots were so prosperous, then, that it would by no exaggeration to say that their lives were flowing with milk and honey. (Their lives had reached the zenith of worldly prosperity). Alas! gone are those days–gone is that happiness, gone is that morality, gone is that religious piety and sanctity–and gone also is the material prosperity and abundance!" I conclude my exposition of this important subject by leaving it to the good judgement and good sense of our discerning readers to find out the justification (element of truth) if any, in these two (contradictory) points of view.

15th June 1885

Peth Old Ganj — JOTIRAO GOVINDRAO PHULE

House No. 395

INTRODUCTION To "Priestcraft Exposed"

It is not necessary to write a long Introduction to this booklet. The pre-eminent position that the Brahmins occupy in our society in India, and the great tyranny that they practise upon the people (the Shudrās and the Ati-Shudrās) is all too well-known. Some one may well ask, 'If this be so, what is the necessity (propriety) of writing this booklet?' Our answer to this (query) is that the Brahmins do not practise their venomous strategy (or stratagems) on all sections of the people with the same uniformity (wickedness). They practise their priest-craft upon the Kunbis (peasants) and the Malis (gardeners) with a special severity. People belonging to the other communities–particularly the advanced sections from these communities in the modern days–are ignorant of this wicked practice (strategy). The Brahmin priestly class are losing their pre-eminence day by day among the educated and progressive people (in our society). Such a (healthy) practice is not to be found among the Shudrās. The obnoxious caste—ascendancy of the Bhats (the priestly class) that was in the ascendant during the regime of the Peshwā–Bajirao II, is still exercising a powerful sway (over the minds of the oppressed Shudrās). Mr. Jotiba's humble effort (exertion) is actuated by an earnest desire to liberate such (unfortunate) people–like the hapless Shudrās from the thraldom of the said priests. Mr. Jotiba has a *second motive* also in writing this booklet. It is to impress (urge) upon our fair-minded and impartial English Government (rulers) the urgent necessity of educating these most useful (having initiative and drive) and industrious classes of people, open their eyes (to their sad plight) and thus liberate them from the thraldom of the Bhat priestly class. If these (commendable) objects are achieved then the exertions (efforts) of the author (Mr. Jotiba Phule) will have been amply rewarded.

(BABA PADAMANJEE)

This book ('Priest-craft Exposed')
is dedicated by the Author,
with great love, to
the Kunbis (cultivators), Malis (gardeners),
Mängs and Mähars
in Maharashtra.

"Enough of (useless) grumbling now. Enough of (useless mortification and heart-burning. (O brave Kshatriya) Banish all thoughts of revenge from your hearts. This is my special piece of advice to you."

"I entreat you, I would like to suggest to you, (that if you do not overcome thoughts of revenge), you will surely land yourself in a great quandary (You will surely come to harm). (*Remember, your brave compatriots*) *jealously preserved their unity.*"

(The Ati-Shudrās) are totally ruined. They are regarded as 'untouchables'–. They are forbidden to engage in any trade, and nobody employs them (even as menials).

They cannot purchase food-grains, and hence, are racked by pangs of hunger. As they have no other means of earning their daily bread (to keep the wolf from the door), they are driven to the extremity of eating the flesh of dead animals.

Totally starved. and unable to bear the pangs of hunger any more, they are forced to resort to the begging bowl (they carry the begging bowl in their hands), and beg unashamedly, for the leftovers of stale food from door to door.

They go on appealing to the lady of the house as "O respected Mother", and to the master of the house as 'O respected brother'. They appeal piteously to all the other members of the household as also to those who happen to visit the house, (but to no avail). (No one takes any notice of their cry from the heart).

The (celebrated, liberal) religion of the Brahmins (perhaps). forbids them to serve the left overs of their stale food (of the previous night) to the Ati-Shudrās condemned as pariahs

"Perhaps they would be committing a great sin if they serve such food to the Ati-Shudrās, as per the dictates of their (celebrated) religion."

They admonish the Ati-Shudrās as follows:—

"Do not wait at our doors, nor should you call out our names (loudly) (for food). We are fed up (sickened at heart) with your unwelcome sight (faces). Go off with you, else I will pelt stones at you."

Jotirao observes – "(O sanctimonious Brahmin), what kind of religion do you profess? What is the secret (kernel) of your religion? (You regard the Shudrās as despicable) and yet you have no qualms to accept alms at the hands of the self–same Shudrās!

How truly wonderful your religion must be!

"(O Brahmins)! Give up your arrogance and pride, and take to the righteous Path. Please consign this false (despicable) religion of yours to flames. (Your *brave* compatriots) have jealously preserved their *unity*.

"O blessed Queen-Empress! You are the Supreme (benevolent) Queen-Mother of this vast *Empire*.

"How is it that you are oblivious of (insensitive to, unmindful of) such a great injustice? Please release (liberate) these oppressed and depressed brethren of mine (from the Brahmins' thraldom).

"You have set a wonderful lesson to the whole world by banning (declaring as illegal) slavery (in your Empire). It will be a blot (slur) on your fair reputation (if you do not free these unfortunate brethren of mine).

"Having heard glowing reports about your far-famed reputation, I have rushed to you (for timely succour). The Brahmins (priestly class) have greatly oppressed (harassed) the Māngs and Mahārs (the Ati-Shudrās in our country). When will your Majesty deign to visit our country and examine their *wretched* condition personally?

"The English Officers have constituted themselves into a great *Durbar* (royal court), are secretly frightened in their hearts (in view of their tremendous responsibility), and hence have delegated (abdicated) their authority and responsibility to the Brahmin bureaucracy.

(The English Officers) are generally ill-informed (about the intricacies of administration), but they want to lord it over all the others. They lead extremely luxurious lives and stake their claims to (sumptuous) pensions.

The Māngs and Mahārs (the Ati-Shudrās) are greatly oppressed and persecuted, and have forgotten their (former) glorious status. (Simpletons that they are) they cannot understand the trickery and strategy of their enemies (the Aryan Brahmins).

(The Brahmins) have taken revenge upon the Ati-Shudrās by condemning them to the meanset status in society (as Ati-Shudrās). If they happen to touch the Ati-Shudrās (whom they condemn as 'untouchables') the Brahmins rush home to take baths (to purify themselves from the polluting touch). How will they, then, dream of teaching the Ati-Shudrās to read and write (the three R's)?

Jotirao has found out all these unpalatable facts (about the wretched condition of the Ati-Shudrās) and, hence, he has taken the trouble to communicate their sad plight to the Queen Empress. Jotirao prays unto Her Majesty to liberate the Ati-Shudrās from the trammels (of Brahmin thraldom).

Priestcraft Exposed

By

Joti Govindrao Fule

"You are an ocean of Compassion, O Lord! We feel impelled to confide our sorrow in you confidently. What other person, apart from you, is there of whom we should beg favours with a piteous countenance?"

Indu Prakash Press, Bombay 1869.

Fie upon your (useless) way of life. The industrious people get hot meals (food).

The So-called clever ones (wise-acres) should note clearly (realise fully)

(that this practice of theirs is, indeed, most discreditable to them.)

Receive this as my solemn, plighted word (pledge) as I do not wish to quibble on or juggle with many words.

Joti teaches (exhorts) the (priestly) scoundrels to eat an honest bread (earned by the sweat of their brows).

Abhang

How the Brahmin Joshi (priest) robs the ignorant Shudra peasant on the *occasion* of *a marriage ceremony.*

"Do not rely on the priest belonging to another (hostile caste (i.e. the Brahmin), for by so doing you are the loser) as you incur a great loss) unnecessarily, under the guise of religios.

"Choose the referees from your own caste–juniors as also seniors–from among the friends of both the parties (to the marriage)."

"Examine very closely (carefully) the essential points regarding the age, the temperament and the mutual affection between the two parties (the bride and the bride-groom).

"The bride and the bride-groom should offer prayers to the Creator and then) should garland each other. Thus all will celebrate (the event) in true joy and happiness.

"There is no need (necessity or propriety) of the Brahmins (as priests) here (at the Shudra weddings), and shoud drive them (the Brahmin priests) away (forthwith), says Joti.

(4) Abhang

How the Brahmin priest (Joshi) robs the Shudra on the occasion of the *coming-of-age of the Shudra's daughter.*

The coming-of-age of the Shudra's daughter is seized upon as a golden opportunity by the Brahmin priests (Joshis). They do not brook any delay and stand at the door (of the Shudra) impatiently.

They express a great joy by using gentle words, but they are inwardly actuated by greed of money.

They ask shamelessly the exact time (of the girl's first menstruation) and consult the almanac to ascertain the positions of the Zodiac Signs.

They undertake ceaseless recitations (of Scriptures) and other types of ritual worship (which is a hoax) and pretend to exert themselves as the dear friends of the Shudra.

They insist on a collective feast for all the Brahmins (in the village) where the choice viands are soaked in pure ghee, and extract a heavy amount by way religious alms ('dakshina').

SECTION (5)

How the Brahmin priest deceives the Shudra on the occasion of the House—warming Ceremony.

The unskilled labourers dig the foundation (of the house) in the burning sun, and carry the baskets of rubble on their heads.

The *masons* climb up the scaffolding, high in the air, and arrange the bircks in proper order in the trenches (of the foundation).

The *carpenters* clamber up the scaffolding like monkeys, and join the beams and pillars (of wood)with the connecting wooden pieces.

The labourers have to perform these (hazardous) jobs for their daily bread (maintenance), and they do their allotted work *fearlessly.*

They have to work hard in the hot sun, and hence their bodies perspire profusely and beads, nay streams, of perspiration flow from their bodies. (An impartial observer's heart) would melt with pity.

The employer (owner of the house) is greatly pleased with the labourers for their hard work, and (in his generosity) promises them all a sumptuous feast. The priests call this feast as the 'House–Warming Feast' and (are constrained to) praise the hard-working labourers (masons etc.)

The Brahmin priest, then, fixes an auspicious day for the said feast, and tempts and cajoles the owner of the house.

They compel the owner of the house to perform the religious ritual of a 'Sacrifice' (fire worship), and to give a sumptuous feast to their castemen. They also decorate the new building with lines of festoons and buntings (as suspicious marks).

They enjoy the feast to their heart's content and also skilfully deceive the host. They are very particular to demand (and receive) liberal monetary gifts by way of religious alms from the (credulous) host, without fail.

They shower blessings on the (credulous) host in the evening, and depart only after robbing the ignorant one (of money and other gifts in kind).

(As the choicest viands have been consumed by the idle Brahmin priests), the owner of the house and the labourers cast longing glances at (the gluttonous priests) and they eat the stale food (the leftovers of the feast) leisurely.

Thus these thugs (crooks) exploit and despoil the simple, credulous Shudra house-holders, and they demean themselves (are morally condemned), *says Joti.*

ABHANG

(A warning to the idle Bhat priests)

Fie upon you, (may your lives be consigned to flames), (O idle priests), as you claim to eat (sumptuous meals) even before the hard-working Shudras (have had their share).

They devour so much food (a free gift) at the feast that the veins of their throats are swollen and they drink water in noisy draughts (gurgling sound)—which turns the stomachs of all.

They are most impatient while the master of the house (and his relations) partake of the (left-overs of the) feast, and if the sweet mixture of joggery (gul) and water ('gulawani') is running short, they advise (the attendants) to dilute it with a liberal dose of water.

Thus the Brahmin priests (Joshis) rob the ignorant Shudras on the dubions authority (support) of the conjunctions of the stars and planets in the sky. Thus these (shameless) gluttons are the great enemies of the Shudrās in this world.

"You should collect all your relations (and kith and kin) in a jovial get-together and should supplant all these impostors (cheats) *root and branch.*

A (sincere) prayer offered humbly to the Creator is a wholesome

(true) meal (feast) at all times (now as ever), says Joti.

SECTION (2)

How the Brahmin Joshi extracts money from a Shudra when a child is born in his house.

Chanting loudly (and rhythmically) the philosophical incantation "I am that He! Who am I?" the Brahmin Joshi enters the house of the Shudra.

He enquires of the Shudra about the time of the child's birth, and casts the child's horoscope. He, then, makes some symbolical movements of his fingers, resembling the gestures of a madman.

After making these calculations, the Brahmin Joshi informs the simple, credulous father that the new-born child is born under the inauspicious constellation of *'Mool'* (origin) (which presages a great danger to all of them).

Hearing these (terrible) words of the cunning (or lying) Joshi, all the members of the Shudrā's family, totally illiterate, were terrified.

The poor mother looked helplessly at her infant and cried inconsolably. The impostor (Joshi) maddened all the members (of the Shudrā's family).

Seizing this golden opportunity, the crafty (Joshi) suggested to the Shudra a powerful remedy (to counteract the baleful influence of the planets). He accordingly caused some (hand-picked) Brahmins to undertake ceaseless recitations of incantations.

He further told the Shudra to give plentiful alms (in cash and kind) to ('learned') Brahmins for performing some special esoteric rituals saying, "A great calamity is likely to befall you. Try to ward if off. Do not dilly-dally".

When the (simple, ignorant) Shudra heard about this impending calamity of the unfavourable planets he thought to himself– "Let me sell off my pots and pans, and let me also borrow some money as a loan–all for my future happiness."

The Brahmins duly performed the requisite esoteric rituals as also the ceaseless recitations (on behalf of the Shudra, as suggested by the Joshi) *ceremonially* but, in that process, the ignorant person (the Shudra) had to incur a lot of (unnecessary) expenditure under the threat of unfavourable planets.

(Then it so transpired that) the child was down with high fever, became most restless, and promptly expired also.

The joyful celebrations attendant on the birth of the child were overcast with a deep pall of sorrow. (Joy was turned into deep sorrow in no time).

"O Joshis ! Do not defraud and deceive the (simple, credulous) people to make a sinful living (to feather your own nests), and (be sure that) God will certainly be angry with you, *says Joti.*

Priestcraft Exposed Section I

(The Aryan Brahmins came to India from Iran as marauders and they fought with the original inhabitants of this land and subjugated them. An attempt is made, in the following *ballad,* to describe the various kings and satraps (and other authorities) in India who were reduced to the status of thralls and helots. Their commander–Parashuram–exiled some of the brave warriors and condemned some other influential ones to the (ignomimious) nether world. The following ballad describes how the Aryan (Brahmins) are persecuting and torturing these intrepid, valiant Kshatriyās even to-day).

(The whole ballad is divided into five parts, each Part consisting of *eight stanzas.* In this rendering, the first one and a half parts are *omitted*—Translator.)

(The Kings and Satraps of India)were given to pursuits of pleasure, and indulged in luxurious lives. The alien Aryans (Brahmins) came to know of this.

The marauders hatched a subtle plot, organised their armies, appointed *Brahmā* as their Commander, and began a general turmoil of loot, arson and general destruction.

The Aryans overpowered some of the native chiefs, imprisoned a few others and reduced multitudes to the status of vassals (thralls). They villainously gave the pejorative name of ' Shudrās ' to all those whom they subjugated.

SECTION (9)

From the booklet- "The Craftiness of the Brahmins"

The Brahmin's temperament and his duties. How he indulges in deceitful practices to satisfy his rapacity and greed.

ABHANG

To be born as a Brahmin (into a Brahmin family) in India is the best fortune. He is so parsimonious that he (wears scanty clothes and hence) resembles (the half-clad) Shudra always.

He has invested the Shudra with a 'sacred thread' and deluded him by telling him that he had become one of the ' twice-born ' (i.e. the Brahmin). But, in reality, there was no change in the Shudrā's condition.

The Brahmin's natural (instinctive) temperament is mischievous and cantankerous, and it is so inveterate that it can never be eradicated.

He is very particular about his ceremonial bath, his ritual recitation of prayers, his distinctive cap and a vermillion (or sandalwood paste) round mark on his forehead (all to show off his piety), and yet he entertains cheap prostitutes.

By wearing a silken dhoti and donning a woollen shawl, he becomes taboo-ridden (' an untouchable ') and disdains even to touch his Shudra (bretheren). How, then, can he be called as ' *pure* '?

The Brahmins forbade the Shudrās even to hear (the recitation of) the Vedās but (they did not think it a pollution) and they taught (Sanskrit and vernacular languages to) the Englishmen readily.

They style themselves as the earth-gods and compel the Shudrās to prostrate themselves at their feet, but (how ironical it is that) they do not think it below their dignity to prostrate themselves at the feet of cheap prostitutes.

They serve food to the Shudra from a distance (to avoid his polluting contact) but do not hesitate to drink wine under the pretext that it is required as a ritual of the Shākta sect (which permitted its followers to eat flesh, imbibe wine and have free sex).

They force the Shudrās to wash their (the Brahmins') feet and further compel them to drink the (dirty) water as ' sanctified water ' (from a holy place), while they kiss and fondle the Mohammedan (foreign) concubines.

Being deprived of education, the Shudra lost all his dignity (was condemned to a low status), and he was forced to take care of (carry, look after) the Brahmin's shoes.

O Shudrās, now do not throw away the Brahmins' shoes that you have been carrying in your hands all these years, but now you should belabour your tormentors with the self-same shoes and search for the Truth diligently, says Joti.

How the Brahmin priest robs and deceives the ignorant Shudra on the occasion of *religious festivals.*

ABHANG

The Brahmin has made the Shudra a mere farm-hand (a slave on his farm). He does not release him (from that condition), and extracts from him an annual contribution by way of taxation.

The Brahmin priest's tricks should be observed carefully in the dark fortnight of the month of Bhādrapad (when the collective death-anniversaries of ancestors are observed), for he harasses the farmer's son all through his life (on account of this anniversary).

He exploits the ignorant Shudra on the occasion of the festivals of *Makar Sankrant* (14th of January, when the sun crosses the Tropic of Capricorn) and the *New Year's day* (Gudhi Padwā– the first day of the month of Chaitra), and the villainous Brahmin priest behaves in a most shameless manner. (He has taken leave of all decency!)

He lies in wait like a stork (ready to pounce upon the fish in the water) at holy places of pilgrimage, and sedulously fleeces the devout, ignorant pilgrims there (by extorting money from him).

In his leisure hours (when no religious rites are to be observed because of unfavourable positions of planets), the Brahmin priest wanders abegging from lane to lane (in the village).

He creates a bogey (a bugbear) of the baleful influence of the stars and planets in the sky (to frighten the ignorant Shudra) and conjures up a frightening scenario (a dramatic situation) out of greed and avarice.

He pummels and kicks the Shudra farmer, extorts alms from him, and finally ruins him completely.

" Do not now wait till the situation gets out of hand (becomes hopeless) but kick up a row and expose the Joshi (the Brahmin priest) in his true colours, O Shudra farmer " !

"(Now is the time) to settle all old scores un-erringly with the hypocritical impostor (the priest) (for his past misdeeds) ".

" O Brahmin priests! having heard the blunt and forthright words of *Jotiba,* give up your nefarious practice of exploiting and despoiling the (ignorant) Shudrās from now on ".

DEDICATION OF THE FIRST EDITION

To the memory

of

Rao Bahadur Ramchandra Balkrishnaji (Jayakar)

President of Param Hans Sabhā,

Late Assistant Commissioner of Customs

and

Justice of the Peace,

This small book is inscribed,

As a mark of Profound Respect

And a Testimony of Sincere
Affection

by

The Author.

Poona

June 1869.

Introduction (to the Ballad on Chhatrapati Shivaji)

This ballad on Shivaji Maharaj has been divided into eight sections. For fear of digression (and avoidance of monotony) all the eight sections have not been cast in the same uniform mode. (Some *variety* has been used). The basic material for this Ballad has been gleaned from old Mohammedan records as also the historical works of English historians like Captain James Grant-Duff. Murry etc. My object in composing this ballad is that it should be of some use and guidance to the Kunbis (farmers). Malis (gardeners). Mahārs and Mangs. all of them Kshatriyās–who were condemned to the lowest and meanest levels (of society) (by the Aryan Brahmins). That is why I have scrupulously avoided the use of bombastic Sanskrit words. However I have used simple Sanskrit words to convey my meaning where it was absolutely essential (where I could not help it). I have taken great pains to use simple words which would be easily understood by the simple, unsophisticated Malis and Kunbis and have used such metres and versification as would be appreclated by those simple folk. The divine Creator of the universe is the controller and regulator of the universe, and He has endowed all of us with the intellectual faculty. Taking pity on us Shudrās (in India) He has brought the British rule (raj) to India by His divine dispensation–the English people (children) beloved of Him–with the intention of emancipating us Kshatriyās from the strangle–hold of the Brahmin demons. And these kind–hearted English people have imparted the true knowledge (fundamental knowledge) to the oppressed and ignorant people like us. This blessed development has created a strong urge in our minds to free ourselves from the said strangle-hold of the cunning and treachevous plot of the Brahmins. I should like to quote a sample of the deep-laid villainy of the Brahmins in the following lines.

If we study and scrutinise carefully the histories of the different people of various nations, we are struck by a strange fact–that the Brahmins of India have elevated themselves to a high altitude (plane) (they regard themselves as a higher breed), and they hate heartily the Parabhus (Prabhus), the Kunbis (farmers) Malis (gardeners), Māngs and Mahārs–as if they were their sworn enemies, and condemn them as ' lesser breeds without the law'. I used to reflcet upon (think serioulsy about) the real reason of their hatred of and supercilious attitude to the above–mentioned categories of people in India. A careful perusal (and study) of volumes in other languages on this vexed question, and the despicable treatment meted out by the Brahmins to these prople conclusively prove the following thesis. The Brahmins had no connection (affinities, ties)

with India–i.e. they were aliens to India. But being actuated (inspired) by an insatiable thirst (urge) for plunder and avarice, they engaged themselves in a series of battles with the original inhabitants of India, and imprisoned those who were captured in these fights, and the Brahma-rājā, the Commander of the Aryan Brahmins-reduced them to the status of serfs or slaves. In order to keep them in this thraldon of the Brahmins eternally, the same Brahmā enacted wholly iniquitous and Draconian laws, being intoxicated with power, codified them into different books, taking care all the while to perpetuate many injustices and invidious provisions (against the hapless Kshatriyās). I am inclined to hazard a guess that Brahmā stopped designating those ' sacred ' books as *" Bhads "* (invidious distinctions) and may have entitled them as the *Vedās,* at a suitable (appropriate) time. On the death of Brahma-rājā, the remaining Kshatriyās fought twenty-one bloody battles with Parashuram to free the Kshatryias subjugated by him (Parasuram), from his clutches, (thraldom), and hence they came to be known as ' Mahā-aris ' (the inveterate enemies). This nomenclature was later corrupted into ' Mahārs '.

Large numbers of Parashuram's followers (soldiers) perished in the wars that Parashuram fought with the intrepid Kshatriya Mahā-aris, with the (catastrophic) result that the Brahmin widows far outnumbered the male Brahmin population. Parashuram did not quite know what to do with them. (How to organize their ways of life and how to absorb them in the social framework presented difficult problems to Parashuram). A semblance of order and social harmony was established when Parashuram forbade the re-marriages of the Brahmin widows. The Aryan Brahmins (under Parashuram's leadership) then began to hate intensely the original inhabitants of India–viz. those who were condemned to the status of serfs (and helots) and the other Mahā-ari Kshatriya warriors. The wicked Brahmins forbade the former to read (study) the ' Bhedās '–i.e. the Vedās, and treated the latter as ' untouchables '. These were very wicked regulations, indeed! Later on, cruel and heartless Kings like *Manu,* to wreak vengeance on the hapless victims, concocted and invented out of their fertile brains, iniquitous rules, regulations and taboos calculated to serve the interests of the Brahmins, and skilfully incorporated them in their spurious scriptures. They, then, invented a further fiction that the said scriptures were 'divine revelations' (were composed by God Himself) and rammed it down the throats of the intrepid Kshatriyās who were now subjugated by the Aryan Brahmins. (They tried to imbibe this fiction on the minds of the enslaved Kshatriyās, under the specious guise of religiosity. Their villainy did not end here (at this point). They further invented the

fiction of 'Shesha'–the quintessence of poisonous hatred–as a mighty serpent, fashioned him into a soft cosy bed on the waters of the ocean, and made *Satchidanand* Narayan lie recumbent on this serpentine bed. They further invented a fiction of a lotus plant supposed to grow-out of Narayan's navel. They installed the four-mouthed Brahma-dev on it, the truly begotten son of God, and circulated the story that this son of God had created (compiled) all the 'Bhedās'-i.e. the *Vedas*, and enjoined upon them all to obey implicitly the commands of God's son (as enshrined in the *Vedās*). By means of many such figments of imagination (fictions, cock-and-bull stories) the wily Brahmins tried to indoctrinate the simple minds of the intrepid Kshatriyās (now enslaved) with the outrageous claim that these spurious scriptures were divine revelations". They, thus, succeeded in degrading and dehumamising the brave Kshatriyās by using the potent weapon of spurious, wicked and unholy travesty of religion. All this is all too well-known. Nay, they went one step further. Flinging all canons of decency and decorum to the winds, the Brahmin authors recorded shamelessly in their scriptures the further fiction that the Shudrās were sprung from the feet of this Brahma-dev. To endow the feet of Brahma-dev with the miraculous capacity to give birth to the Shudrā sons is, I dare say, a truly astounding fiction indeed! It is a well-known fact that it is the privilege of a woman to give birth to a child. To posit the possibility of the birth of a child from the feet of the pure Brahma-dev runs counter to the operation of the *Laws of Nature*. The normal function of feet is to walk, and we are asked to believe that the Shudra son was born of Brahmadev's feet. We are also asked to believe that the Brahmin was born of the mouth of Brahma-dev. If we were to accept this (ludicrous) hypothesis (theory), then the credulous disciples of Brahma-dev (the Brahmins) will have to accept the equally ludicrous hypothesis (theory) that the mouth of Brahma-dev was performing a wholly novel function–viz. that of a female uterus–where a child is normally conceived). This proves conclusively that such arguments are as ridiculous as the game of make-believe played by little girls in the neighbourhood (of their homes). (It is as ridiculous and un-becoming as sinful conduct indulged in secretly by women). So be it ! If we subject this ridiculous hypothesis of the Brahmins to a searching scrutiny, it will expose its fraudulent nature. So rather than indulge in that fruitless exercise, we prefer to forgive them for their erroneous beliefs, and leave the rest to the good sense of our discerning readers. If our humble efforts (exertions) meet with the approval of (are welcomed by) discerning and enlightened people (readers) we shall be encouraged (heartened) to compose and publish, with great joy, some more ballads like the present one (on Shivaji

Maharaj) about great Kshatriya warriors like *Mhasoba* (Mahā Subhā) who flourished in our ancient history (who were distinquished in our past history) but who, unfortunately, were condemned to the nether world (Hades) (tc the meanest level) by the wily Brahmins.

While I was engaged in the task of composing this ballad (on Shivaji Maharaj), my childhood-friend Mr. (Vinayakrao Bapji) Bhandarkar who, unlike some people who tried to foil my efforts, constantly encouraged and cheered me up in accomplishing this my task in a worthy and creditable manner. I am deeply beholden unto him. I am also grateful to Rev. Baba Padamanjee and Gangadhar Shastri for dotting the 'i's and crossing the 't's (of this ballad).

A Ballad about Chhatrapati Shivaji Raje Bhonsle

(The last two sections of the Ballad have been translated here).

"Oh (Shivaji) Maharaj, speak with us, please! Why have you stopped (given up) speaking with us? You took as your companions the simple peasants (of Maharashtra). You made the (half) naked (folk) into soldiers. You braved the scorching heat of the Sun, and were not afraid of the (pouring) rains. You wandered high and low over the mountains (and through the caverns) and, thus, brought the Mohammedans to heel (subjugated them). Sometimes you resorted to plunder the (enemy's) territory, but took care to foster and encourage your own countrymen (compatriots). You displayed extraordinary intellectual powers and thereby cast your magic spell over all in the country. Though the state exchequer was full, he (Shivaji) was most economical in his expenditure (he managed the state finances very prudently). He allowed the soldiers a certain share in the state treasury (exchequer), as he never coveted wealth (for its own sake) (was never avaricious). He was eternaally vigilant, and banished idleness and sloth (from his own life). He was ever mindful of (he never neglected) his cavalry units–be they ever so small or great. He was pre-eminently the first king among all the Kshatriyās, and nobody could hold a candle (up) to him (he was in a class by himself, non-pareil). He was unrivalled (deeply skilled) in subtle tricks and stratagems (of state-craft) and used to impress and persuade the common folk to join his side (support his cause). He was intrepid and undaunted in calamities and saved himself most skilfully and dexterously (he came off unscathed through all calamities). He used to capture forts and other territories from the enemy by resorting to secret and furtive tactics. He used to fight with (and vanquish) the traitors first, and, then, would engage himself in a great battle (with the enemy). Even when he was engulfed

in (a number of) battles, he was ever mindful of his subjects, and always endeared himself to the ryots. (The ryots were ever close to his heart). He was never impervious (indifferent) to the welfare of the ryots, and always enacted new laws (which were beneficial to the common people). He used to pay attention even to the meanest of the mean (among his subjects), and everybody's interests were safeguarded by him. (Nobody was neglected). He was of a diminutive stature, and always relied more on resourcefulness and clever stratagems than on physical might. He had a pleasant, attractive mien and it was a veritable seal (imprint) inscribed with jewel-like virtues and graces.

He was so un-assuming that he never took liberties with others, and was guileless and innocent by temperament (at home). His conversation was sweet and pleasant. He was thoughtful and reasonable (by temperament), and, thus, would establish his supremacy (over others). He strove ceaselessly for the welfare of (his subjects), and kept many of his relatives in his employ (as retainers and faithful followers). Sometimes he used to be wroth with those whom he had pampered (who were very dear to him). Having read historical records in English, I designate Chhatrapati Shivaji as a scion of the Kshatriya race, who has thoroughly exposed (made fun of, discomfited) the iniquities of the Brahma. Jotirao Phule has sung the praises of (eulogised) the son of a Shudra (Shivaji Maharaj) who was the authentic and chief overlord of the Peshwas. I chant (recite) the ballad of Shivaji Maharaj), the darling son of Jijabai, who proved to be the scourge of the Mohammedans.

I, hereby, chant (recite) the ballad (Saga) of Chhatrapati Shivaji Bhonsle who was an adornment of (celebrated and famous among) the toiling peasants.

A letter to Shrimant Maharaj Sayajirao Gaikwad, Baroda State

May you kindly take pity, take pity, (on the poor and down-trodden Shudrās), whom the Bhats (Brahmins) have greatly harassed (have driven to poverty).

The (venerable?) Aryan Brahmins forbade the Shudrās to take education, which was the root-cause (foundation) of their wretched condition. Thus they degraded the Shudras to the (meanest) level of the beasts (of the field).

They (the Bhats) expend money (liberally) on various amusements (for merriment), but at the same time they (the Bhats) ignore or neglect (the welfare of) the Shudrā women. Even (manly) persons play the roles of nautch-boys in the folk-plays and entertainments (in villages) which brings slur (discredit) to the manliness of men.

They (shamelessly) attend the musical concerts of the professional concubines, (at the latters' residences) and, thereby, soil (fling to the winds) the basic canons of morality. While they wallow in sin, they (have the temerity to) blame (find fault with) the virtuous ladies (from respectable homes). (The Peshwa and his Brahmin henchmen) squander the state revenues (contributed by the sweat of the Shudrās' brows) on providing sumptuous feasts to the idle (good for nothing) Brahmin mendicants (as in the Peshwā's *'Ramanā'*), while the Shudra peasants who have to toil and moil on their farms have to make do with dry bread and chilly-powder.

(Vast amounts of money are spent) on the annuities paid to the idle Brahmins out of the state treasuries (exchequer) which are, thus, depleted. (Be it noted that) the hard-working peasants fill the said exchequer with money earned by the sweat of their brows.

The peasant's bullocks are so hard-worked that (occasionally) they die while engaged in rigorous agricultural operations–such as sowing, tending the crops or pulling the plough (in the field), while the (shameless, idle) Bhats (Brahmins, the priestly class) extract gifts of cows from the ignorant Shudrās (on religious grounds). How can the exploited peasants ever regard these exploiters as their relatives (kith and kin)?

(Under the Peshwa's regime), the Aryan Bhats (the idle priestly class) enjoy sumptuous feasts daily, while the hard-working peasants are ever famished for want of even dry bread all their lives.)

The Shudrās pay monetary gifts as alms (in cash), with folded hands (submissively) to the Bhat priests, but the State Government never grants any public (collective) remission to the toiling peasants (in the payment of their land-assessment and other taxes).

Pairs of (ceremonial) shawls and other monetary gifts are granted (by the Govt.) to the Bhat priests and their equally undeserving children (who are no better than nautch-boys). Then why does the Govt. never give such (suitable) awards (gifts) to the ideal farmers (for their skill in that field)?

The Govt.'s policy of charging an excise levy on the sale of wine results in encouraging vices (addicted persons). (I am most surprised at the Govt'.s callousness) about the deleterious effects of this excise levy (on the morals of the people).

The illiterate Shudrās and Ati-Shuprās are at a loss to understand the implications of these measures (of the Govt.) I earnestly request your Highness (Sayajirao Maharaj) to assume the responsibility of a foster-father (in loco parentis) of these dumb millions (subjects).

Your Highness has shown (described) the sad plight of the hard-working (and long-suffering) subjects to your Diwan (the Prime Minister). I have presumed (made bold) to pen these verses (and urged them on your Highness' attention) as your Highness is reputed to be a veritable ocean of mercy (to the down-trodden subjects).

Every one knows that opportunity knocks on our door but once. (An opportunity, if lost once, may not come our way again), and the (monsoon) floods do not visit (occur in) the valleys and the mountains eternally.

Only the (thirsty) soldiers fighting on the battle-field appreciate (realise) the true worth (value) of (life-giving) water there. An inhabitant of Vārānsai (Kashi) is likely to regard the (sanctity of) Mother Ganges contemptuously. (Familiarity breeds contempt)

Jotirao prays earnestly unto Sayajirao Maharaj (of Baroda) that he should take the fullest advantage of the golden opportunity now presented to him. (It may not come his way again).

A Letter to Mr. Laxman Jagannath, the Diwan of Baroda

Let me first enlighten (address myself to) Mr. Laxman (Jagannath), and let me hit the nail on the head.

The Bhats (Brahmins) are fully aware of the fact that Shrimant Sayajirao Maharaj champions the cause of the Shudrās heartily. Let us frustrate the evil designs of the cunning ones (the Bhats) with our appropriate (suitable) strategies (policies).

The ancestors (of the Shudrās) were brave warriors using swords and shields (they had distinguished themselves most creditably on the battle field). Let us rejuvenate (reactivate, arouse) them to their pristine glory with the aid of nectar-like Truths.

Let us strive by day and dream by might for the allround progress and proseprity of our mother-land. Let us try our best to foster a living unity between the *Bhats* (Brahmins) and the Mangs, and let us encourage them to inter-dine collectively. (We shall visit Gujerat again and shall deliver (enlightening) lectures there. Jotirao wishes, from the bottom of his heart, all (glorious) success to the Diwan (of Baroda) in his endeavour.

The Ballad of the Conquered (Slaves)

The wicked Aryan Brahmins conquered the original inhabitants of this land and subjugated and stigmatised them as (their hated) slaves. You were never anyone's vassals. Question the Vedās bluntly, and drag them out (in the open) publicly. The Dasyus (the so-called slaves) were, indeed, brave, pure at heart and upright in their conduct..... You were the original lords of this land, O Dasyus. Take a balanced view (think rationally) about the degradation (miserable condition) to which you have been reduced (by the Aryans). Humanity has been outraged by your degradation and nobody respects you (speaks well of you). Slavery or thraldom is most demeaning (degrading) and the future of your children is most bleak and depressing. O Dasyus! Take a long-range view (be far-sighted), and embrace (adopt) modern, rational notions. This is the gist of my exposition (*says Joti*).

(2)

The Aryans persecuted the Māngs a great deal, and sometimes buried them alive in the....foundations of (their) buildings. Those who survived these persecutions have to beg for a few crumbs (left-overs) from the Aryans' sumptuous feasts, as they have no prospects or hopeful future in their unjust dispensation. O Shudrās! You have no aptitude or regard for the Truth,

nor do you care for your dignity or status. Thus you have been rendered impotent (powerless) (by the Aryans). Being deprived of all power and prestige, you have fallen on evil days, most regrettably. Think carefully and introspectively (over your sad plight)..... Though you have laboured hard in their service, sacrificing your all in the process–(heart, body and soul), and though you have protected them all along, they do not take pity on you at all. The earth-gods (the Brahmins) were pleased with you, and hence they 'liberated' you—by condemming you to tortures and indignities. How is it that you have become so servile as to prostrate yourselves at the feet of the Brahmins? If you study the *Manu-Smriti,* and the other (spurious) scriptures of the Brahmins carefully, you will realise the great danger lurking in them. You have experienced yourselves that the Brahmins are pleased so long as you propitiate them with liberal alms. O Shudra! the Brahmin has the temerity to insult your wife, as a slave or a serf (a household menial) under your very nose. I shall quote chapter and verse from the Vedās and prove to you O Shudras, that you were Kshatriyās once upon a time in this land of ours. Take heed (of this truth) carefully.

(3)

The Aryan Brahmins have insulted and humiliated (valiant) Kings like *Bali* who were your revered masters and ancestors, and condemned you to tortures. You are starving now, and thus you present a pitiable spectacle to the whole world. You demean yourselves by washing the feet of the Brahmins and drinking that polluted water as 'holy water'. This is the limit (height) of indignity for a truly heroic people,.....

.....

If you neglect education, you will go to dogs (will be totally ruined) and it will be counted as a blot on your fair reputation (ancestry). The Aryans hoist their own flag of fame and victory, and make themselves merry in their petty sphere. You are illustrious scions of illustrious parents but are imprisoned as birds in the Aryans' cages. You are so bereft of any merit, so that the world at large cannot praise you, nor can the poets rhapsodize over your worth publicly. You are penniless, you sport side-blazers, and a band of white cotton is hung about your neck as a mark of slavery. The farmer's penury is your lot at home and your womenfolk are compelleted to wear rags. Even though you are advised persuasively and incessantly, you don't feel the indignity of the shackles that fetter your legs. Verily you are like the boar. You may wash it clean in the pure waters of the Ganges, but as soon as you drag it out, it promptly wallows in mire. .....

(4)

I shall narrate to you, again and again, a factual story about the interest and welfare of the lot of the Shudrās. I have often heard (and also experienced) about the sad plight of many Shudrās for want of knowledge (education). The illustrious Kshatriya Kings like the Scindias, Holkars and Bhosales did not realise the enormity of the Aryans' deep–laid plot. .....

The English scholars churned (the ocean of) the Vedās and revealed to us all, the esoteric secret contained in them. They exposed the erroneous philosophy of the Vedās (Scriptures), expounded the eternal Truth, and thus established the reign of *righteousness*. The Brahmins were at their wit's end (were confused), and hence some of them embraced Christianity, pretending all the while to profess Truth. The Machiavellian Brahmins often found (establish) "*People's Organisations*" in diverse places and try to enlist members by holding out a false promise (subterfuge) of promoting unity (among the people). (The Shudrās should) realise the crafty nature of the Aryans, and try to search for the eternal Truth. The result of these tricks and subterfuges being practised by the Aryans will be disastrous, and hence the Shudrās should think carefully about them. The (venerable) *Gautama the Buddhā* defeated the Brahmins on their own battle-field, and was renowned all over the world. The Brahmins, therefore, nurse a secret grudge against the Buddha in their hearts, beat their breasts and weep and wail loudly (for their discomfiture). The Shudras are not able to join together the (radiant) flames (of rebellion and enlightenment) and stand united (against the Brahmins) in the universe (everywhere). Kindly remember the blunt and forthright words of Jotirao Phule which are pregnant with (prophetic) meaning.

The one and only religion of the Creator is the Truth. What is the use of empty learning ? *says Joti.*

There is no other religion except the *Truth* in this world. Inform all the people of this secret, *says Joti.*

One who is adept in many languages (who is a linguist) who is rich in virtues, and who speaks the Truth does not need to be formally initiated in religion, nor does he need the protection of the reigning monarch (at that time). Age is no bar or deterrent to him. He or she regards all (human beings) as his or her brothers and sisters. He does not grow arrogant by holding heretic opinions. Truth is his chief religion, and it is faithfully reflected in his day-to-day actions, *says Joti.*

The true humanitarian religion consists in truthful conduct. The Brahmin does not know this talisman. Laxmi the goddess of wealth massages the feet of the hard-working Shudras. She never spurns them as mean farmers or labourers. If you make all others happy, all evil flies (disappears) from the world. An industrious man is the true friend of the poor, and you should strive for his prosperity, *says Joti.*

From: **The Untouchables' "Apologia"**

(Mahatma Phule imagines that Her Majesty Queen Victoria has come to India on an imperial visit. In the course of her royal itinerary, Her Majesty is supposed to visit a small village. She visits the wretched locality outside the village inhabited by the untouchables. Some conversation takes place between Her Majesty and the untouchables–represented by a Mang and a Mahar–, of course, with the aid of an *Interpreter.* We give below a translation of the *last five pages* of this conversation–entitled by Jotiba as *"The Untouchables' Apologia".*

Then the Mahar or Mang bows down reverently before the Queen, and puts forth his point of view.

Mahār or Māng—Nearly a century has elapsed since the advent of the British rule in India. In the beginning, the British administrators came to have some idea of the privations and difficulties faced by the untouchables in northern India and in the Madras Presidency. But they were not much impressed with it. But these British Officers expressed their sorrow (deep anxiety or concern) about the sad plight of our untouchable brethren in northern India and in the Madras Presidency–privately as aslo publicly. When the brave, kind-hearted British administrators and officers (well-versed in the art of administration and diplomacy) got a foot-hold in Central India, they came to realise clearly the hypocritical nature of our (Hindu) religion, as also our sad plight. Some of these British administrators came to know personally in the course of their official work (transactions), the sad plight to which the untouchables were reduced as a result of the religious bigotry and tyranny (practised by the Brahmins). These they recorded carefully in their official documents. Some of them communicated their views to their personal friends while some (English) historians recorded these regrettable facts in the books of history that they wrote. They have put it on record (in these books) that the untouchables were considerably disadvantaged (and oppressed) as a direct result of the *pernicious caste system* prevalent in our society. So also the Shudrās, who suffered greatly by this caste-system wished, in their heart of hearts, for the downfall of the high-caste people (the Brahmins), and

waited eagerly for a suitable opportunity to vanquish them. The high-caste people (the Brahmins), priding themselves on their caste-superiority, became immoral and defiant. When the nationals of a countsy are deeply antagonised and riven by such inveterate hatred and animosity that nation (India) becomes a tempting target for the foreigners' attacks and subjugation. The English historians have recorded their views to this effect in their *history-books*.

The benevolent British Government has taken many steps and measures to establish (a rule of) peace in our country. The Government must have realised that if they allowed the chaotic conditions created by an unjust and tyrannical religion in matters of day-to-day dealings in morality, in politics and in trade and commerce to remain unchecked indefinitely the Government would not last long here (would soon come to an end) (the security of the Government will be jeopardised). The high-caste people (the Brahmins) will sulk and keep themselve aloof from others, priding themselves on their high-caste and misplaced notions of superiority. The Shudras may well solicit our help to enable them to vanquish the high-caste ones (the Brahmins) and to establish their own supremacy over them (the Brahmins). If they succeed in overpowering the Brahmins they will, then, dream of vanquishing the Mohammedans-on the strength of their vast numbers aided and abetted by our (the British) valuable assistance. The next logical step would be that they would drive us (the British) away from India. It is also quite possible that the high-catse Brahmins, who were antagonised by our aid to the Shudrās in putting them down might solicit help of some other foreign powers (such as the French, or the Dutch, or the Portuguese etc.) and vanquish us as also the Shudrās on the battle-field, and may succeed in establishing themselves as the rulers of India. The (British) Government has undertaken many projects which would result in the welfare of the subjects as also in the furtherance of our own interests. By the grace of the Omniscient and all-just Almighty we have prospered so far in our undertaking, our rule (Government) is established on a secure foundation, and we have every reason to expect that, God willing, it will continue to be safe and secure in the years to come also.

First of all, the British Government turned their attention to the all-important task of improving (and modernising) *Indian agriculture*, and with that end in view, thought of introducing the use of the English (iron) plough here. But (we are sorry to state that) this commendable project of the Government did not succeed. All the farmers here are the Shudrās, and they instinctively feel that to substitute the wooden plough with the iron plough would be tantamount to disobeying the dictates

of their forefathers, to abandoning their old (sacred) practices and to have committed a great sin. If any reforms (changes) based on physics (any scientific reforms) were to be introduced (in agriculture) the (ignorant) farmers were not willing to accept them (at all). Their old way (method) of agriculture was out-moded and conservative (not permitting any changes). If crops failed in one year because of severe drought, they did not have the means (wherewithal) to see them through till the next year. Our benevolent and just British Government fully realised the pitiable condition of the Shudrā farmers here, and took many prompt steps to alleviate their misery. But (may we say that) all these good measures taken by the Govenrment have no relation to our (economic) condition, because very few Mahārs and Māngs are cultivators of the soil (as they have no land at all to cultivate). So we shall drop this subject, and consider those reforms only which are relevant to our way of life (our economic condition). Of the many reforms introduced by the British Government to improve our economic condition, there are two which are most relevant to us. They are—

(1) Public Utility Works (works which are beneficial to the public at large)

(2) Effort to provide more liberal educational facilities.

The public works are not specially beneficial to us. We Ati-Shudrās are allowed to walk freely along the public highways (streets) along with the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Kunbis (the cultivators). I do not mean to imply that we have not derived any benefit from this facility. All I wish to state is that these public works are executed either by the Government Departments (P.W.D.) or by the contractors who have contracted (undertaken) to complete the job for the Government. In such cases, we (the Ati-Shudrās, the untouchables) do not benefit from these works as much as the other sections of society do. The reason for this state of affairs may be as follows. (Let me hasten to add) that the Government nowhere lays down a law that employment under these public works should be provided only for a certain section of the population to the exclusion of all the others. Our religion is the chief impediment (obstruction) in our path. The Brahmin clerk (foreman, supervisor) is likely to derive more benefit (by way of greasing his palm) from the labourers belonging to the Mali (gardener) and the Kunbi (cultivator) caste than from the labourers belonging to our (untouchable), (Ati-Shudrā) caste. This being the (patent) case, the Brahmin foreman (clerk) at these works takes due care to exclude us (Ati-Shudrās) deliberately from the said employment, and invariably employs

labourers from the other castes (such as *Malis* and *Kunbis* etc.) There is another handicap also in our case. The Mangs and Mahars are not allowed to work along with the Malis and Kunbis because of the *hateful caste-system* (wherein we are treated as untouchables). We do not experience these handicaps uniformly at all the public utility works. In some cases, the handicaps are more, whereas in some other cases, there are practically no handicaps at all. Our chances of deriving benefits from these works vary in different proportions on different sites. We experience a great many difficulties in Departments which are dominated mostly by the Brahmins, and hence we do not derive any benefits there. Where this domination of the Brahmins is not too pronounced, there we are favourably placed (our handicaps are not too vexatious).

Formerly, the Municipal facilities were not available to the people in all the places (in our country). We (the Ati-Shudras) were obliged to perform sundry menial jobs (and chores) in connection with the Municipalities as at present. But (we are happy to state that) our lot is much better now than formerly, our wages are regulated and they are paid to us regularly (which is a great relief to us). The situation in the past was much worse. We did not receive any help from the Government in the matter of our wages. We were at the mercy of the people (the Brahmins and the Shudras) even for claiming wages (remuneration) for the work we used to put in there. We are happy to admit that to-day we are a little less ignorant than what we were in the past, and we are becoming conscious of our (rights and) condition now considerably, and are able to understand the tricks that were practised on us. The people belonging to the three high strata (sections) of society–viz., the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas, as also the farmers (or cultivators) belonging to our own category (class) detest and hate (look down upon) the menial work that we do in discharging our duties in the Municipality (such as scavenging etc). You can just imagine in what quandary (crisis) these self-same people will land themselves if we were to detest our dirty work and to boycott it (for a while). These so-called high-caste people will perish in the filth and insanitation (caused by themselves), or they will be forced to perform the menial tasks (scavenging etc.) like us– the Mahārs and the Māngs (Ati-Shudras). There would be no other go (alternative) for them. They will have to sweep the streets, to clean the (blocked) dirty gutters, and to make their shoes themselves (like cobblers). They will have to fashion the brooms (for sweeping). The so-called high-caste people in our society must visualise the terrifying situation (must shudder at the prospect of) just now hinted at by us, under the otherwise just dispensation of the British Government. But one thing is

certain. Fearing in their heart of hearts such an eventuality or because of their helplessness in such a situation, the so-called high-cast people in the countryside are shedding off their former arrogance (are becoming humble). How we wish that the bubble of their *caste-based arrogance* would burst once for all, which would result in considerable good (benefit, happiness) to all of us.

The British Government has opened a number of schools (in our cities and villages also) with the object that the pupils should garner valuable knowledge, that the people should realise their own situation (in life), that the people should know how to conduct themselves with their fellow-men, that they should understand their duties and responsibilities (mission) in their sojourn in this world. The Government was actuated by a noble desire in opening these schools that students from all castes and communities here would attend these schools and would surely become learned, that they would realise the meaning and significance of the true Religion, and thus having become enlightened, learned and liberated, they would be inspired to extirpate *the pernicious caste-system* and its resultant evil effects. But the intention of the Government has not proved to be correct. Though the British Government was quite convinced that our orthodox religion (Hinduism) was tainted with many imperfections, they dared not take prompt and strict steps to remove those anomalies, for they knew that their interference in matters religious would endanger the safety and security of their rule (regime) and would threaten the peace and amity of the subjects. However, the (English) missionaries began their evangelical work (of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ). Though they genuinely desired to break down the evil caste-barriers and distinctions (among the Hindus), they were also preaching to the natives here to embrace their religion (Christianity). That is why their efforts also (to break down these caste-barriers) were of no avail. The joint efforts of the British Government and the English missionaries resulted in an enrichment of educational facilities to the children (of the subjects) and hence in their educational progress. The Government came to know from the reports of their (educational) Officers that the number of Brahmin pupils attending the schools far exceeds that of other (Shudrā and Ati-Shudrā) children in all parts of India. The number of Shudra pupils attending the schools is very meagre indeed! It is a sad fact that the Shudra and Ati-Shudra children do not attend these schools at all, because they have not got the means (the economic competence) to encourage them to do so. It is true that the Government has taken some (useful) steps to facilitate the attendance of the Shudrā and Ati-Shudrā pupils at the said

schools such as completely free education to the children of the Mahārs and the Māngs, and 5 percent free studentships to the children of the Shudras, on their tendering the applications for such concessions. A careful scrutiny of the reports of the Educational Inspectors reveals the sad fact that the number of the Shudra and Ati-Shudra children attending these schools is far from satisfactory.

We must now try to find out the reasons as to why the children of Mahārs and Māngs (Ati-Shudras) do not attend the (primary) schools even though the Government provides them education *free of cost*. When the Ati-Shudra children are about 5 or 6 years old, we (their parents) force them to do some menial (or manual) work. We are not in a position to allow them to laze about freely or to be able to send them to the School, as we cannot manage even to feed them properly. The reason is quite obvious. It need not be explained. We are labouring under the wrong impression that, if we were to send our children to the school, they would lose their innate sturdiness, and hence would not be able to perform their traditional jobs (or chores) as before. Even if they become educated, it is feared that they would not be rewarded suitably (unlike the children of the Brahmins and the Shudrās). All this goes to prove that we have not got the economic competence to afford the luxury of education to our children. The only benefit they reap by attending the school may be an enrichment of their (bookish) knowledge, but somehow we have taken it into our heads that our children become frail and delicate (and not robust) in physique, and hence they will be unable to put in hard manual labour (that is our usual lot). Under these circumstances, how shall we dare send them to the school?

It is a fact that we haven't got the economic competence to acquire the minimum (academic) qualification needed for being eligible for Government service. If we are thus ineligible for securing Government service (jobs), then how can the Government provide jobs for us, and how should we expect to get them? We shall not, then, be justified in blaming the British Government for not providing Government jobs for us. Here we would like to acknowledge gratefully that it is the British Government which has liberated us from the tyranny of the Peshwa's regime, and that our condition to-day is much better than what it was under the rule of the Marathas (Maratha Princes etc.). We have got some rudimentary knowledge (of our present condition) and hence we have been emboldened to appear before you (Your Majesty) and to place before you most humbly our tale of woe (our sad lot). In sum, it may be stated that we do receive some assistance from the Government, but it is not sufficient to enable us to improve our

miserable condition. If our compatriots (the Brahmins) who have been responsible for degrading us to this pitiable condition by their fraudulent and deceitful practices, and our other (Shudra) compatriots who have suffered a little less (at the hands of the Brahmins) but who are now in a postion to extend some assistance to us, if both of them can jointly extend their helping hand to us and lift us out of the deep well (morass of misfortune) we shall, then, be able to come out of this morass and move about freely and spontaneously (as free men). Religious bigotry has ruined us completely. Our compatriots do not feel like helping us because of this regrettable bigotry. Basic decency requires that the compatriots should help their brethren (of the same nation). Not only do they (the Brahmins) not help us in any way, but they have been mainly responsible for our present plight and quandary.

It would be instructive to consider the dealings between us and the *money-lenders.* If we take a loan of twelve annas from him, we have to execute a bond that we have taken the loan at an interest of four annas per rupee, per month. If we were to take a loan from the crafty maney-lender at such an exorbitant and inhuman rate of interest, with the fond hope of running a profitable concern on our own, you can just imagine in what hopeless quandary we may be landing ourselves.

Supposing we were willing to send our children to the school, his schooling (education) is full of difficulties (is not smooth-sailing at all). His class-teacher as also his classmates harass him jointly. The class-teacher makes him sit apart from the other students in the class (he being an Ati-Shudrā) supposedly under Government (Education Department) orders, and imparts instruction to him from a distance, and that too most indifferently. Can you call this an instance of fraternal love for one's compatriots? Thus it will be clear that under these unfavourable circumstances our children do not imbibe any worthwhile learning at their school, thus resulting in a great loss to us as also to our children. (We are the losers in the bargain).

Even half-baked pupils (who have not been properly educated) can secure Government service. But they cannot expect to serve there on a permanent basis as all their superiors (the Brahmin Officers) detest, despise and torment the Mahars and the Māngs.

At the present time we (Ati-Shudrās) cannot easily take to trade (or commerce) because of our poverty and our lack of experience in that field. We are totally ignorant of trade and commerce as we are not allowed to mix freely with (associate freely with) the traders (trading community or merchants) because of *religious taboos.*

Out traditional menial work is regarded by others as contemptible, and we are forbidden to engage ourselves in any other occupation. Religion is a great stumbling block to us in our day-to-day life as also in (the choice of) our new profession (trade etc.) If we were to approach some knowledgeable traders or artisans with an humble request to teach us the rudiments of the craftsmanship we are brusquely packed off with such words as–"Who will teach an Ati-Shudrā (a Mahār or a Māng) like you? You should be content with your traditional occupation (menial work) to earn your livelihood" So much about (such is the miserable fate of) our efforts in seeking new avenues of employment or trade. We are totally ignorant of (the provisions made by the Government) in their dispensation (regarding our employment). We are not able to understand if the British Government (rule) is praised or traduced (criticised) in the articles appearing in the vernacular (Marathi) newspapers. Are we fully aware of (conversant with) the manner in which the Government administration is run (in our cournty)? Not at all. We have vaguely heard that there is a *Parliament* (an Assembly or a Council) which is in overall charge of the administration of our country. We are totally ignorant of the manner in which the representatives of the people (the legislators) are elected to this body and also of the duties they are supposed to perform. We also do not know if these legislators (MPs or representatives of the people in Parliament) fully discuss the problems facing us and take a considered decision (after due deliberations).

We (the Ati-Shudrās) are totally ignorant of the political problems and the political process, and we have no say whatsoever in the administration. We are also unaware of the major political problems we are faced with. Everyone speaks glibly about these (problems) and (we form our opinions) only on hearsay.....

(This is the end of the manuscript–Editor) □□

Introduction to ' The Cultivator's Whip-Cord ' by Jotirao Govindrao Phule (6th April 1883)

For want of education, intellect was lost; for want of intellect, morality was lost; for want of morality, dynamism was lost; for want of dynamism, wealth was lost; for want of wealth the Shudrās were degraded (demoralised)—want of education (being uneducated) has caused all these disasters!

The object of writing this book—There are many religious and political reasons responsible for the total degradation (demoralisation) of the Shudra farmers at the present time (1883). My object in writing this book is to discuss (pin-point) some of those reasons. As almost all the Government departments are dominated by Brahmin bureaucrats, and also because of (the tenets of) spurious and oppressive religious practices, the Shudra farmers are exploited by the Bhat priestly class, and as most of the English Government officers are given to slothful and luxurious ways of life, the Shudra farmers are further exploited by the Brahmin bureaucrats (officers). My desire is that if the Shudra farmers study this book carefully (and reflect over it), they would be enabled to protect themselves from the above-mentioned domination and exploitation. That is why I have designedly entitled this book as ' *The Cultivator's Whip-Cord.* '

Dear readers ! The term ' farmer ' comprises three categories (1) farmer pure and simple i.e. a Kunbi, (2) a Mali (a gardener or a horticulturist) and (3) a shepherd. There are valid reasons for this three-fold classification. Those who were totally (wholly) dependent upon dry farming (cultivation of their dry and) for their livelihood were known as *Kul-wadis* or *Kunbis*, those who were cultivating irrigated land in addition to dry farming came to be called as *Malis* (*gardeners or horticulturists*) and those who owned (managed) flocks of sheep and goats in addition to the two (above-mentioned) activities came to be designated as *shepherds.** These three distinct categories may have come into existence because of the nature of their respective modes of livelihood. But to-day we find that the Kunbis, the gardeners and the shepherds are branded as *three separate castes.* Persons

* Khanderao of Jejuri, the family deity of the Shudrās, married two wives from two different castes–*Mhalsai* from the Shudra Kunbi caste, and *Bānabāi* from the Shudra Dhangar (shepherd) caste. This shows that inter-marriage was a common practice among the Kulwadis and the shepherds.

belonging to these three 'castes' *inter-dine* among themselves, but they do not *inter-marry* (among themselves) †

They were in receipt of pensions a circumstance which they showed off (flaunted) (to all their friends). Thus they amass estates by earning money through devious ways. But when they pass away, their happy-go-lucky, pleasure-seeking children, who are least interested in education, squander the estate, become paupers and are forced to beg from door to door for daily bread, invoking their father's name.

The ancestors of some of these 'prodigal sons' had distinguished themselves as brave warriors on the battle-fields or as astute statesmen and diplomats (in politics) and had won Jāgirs and Ināms from the Government. Some like the *Scindias* and the *Holkars* had carved out their fortunes as veritable kings. But the present descendants of some of these celebrities, being ignorant (and unlettered) are driven to the extremity of either mortgaging or selling off their Jāgirs or Ināms (their patrimony). They are so indigent and indebted that they do not know where their next meals would come from. (They are starving). Most of these Jāgirdars and Ināmdars (feudatory chiefs) have hardly any idea as to how their ancestors distinguished themselves in battles or what superhuman odds they had to overcome (to attain their positions). Having inherited their estates or properties without any intrinsic merit (not having earned them the hard way), and being un-educated, they were addicted to many vices, and spent their time, day and night, in the company of equally disreputable and profligate campanions. There were very few among them who were not caught in the debt-trap (who were not indebted) and whose Jāgirs were not mortgaged. There are some Indian Princes who may not be caught in the debt-trap but their retainers and hangers-on and their Brahmin advisors and estate managers are so cunning, shrewd, calculating and Machiavellian that they take every possible care to see that their masters (the Indian Princes) are not blessed with the saving graces of (a liberal) education or the civilizing influence of elevated moral virtues.

† So we are justified in stating that the three categories of Kunbis, Malis (gardeners and Dhangars (shepherds) belonged to one and the same caste viz the Shudra farmers (farming community). The persons belonging to these three 'castes' were constrained (compelled) to give up farming by force of circumstances, and began to follow different trades or occupations (avocations) to earn their livelihood. Those who have some financial competence are content to cultivate their dry farms. A majority of them though unlettered superstitious, semi-naked and starving (famished) earn a precarious living from their dry lands. Those who have nothing to fall back upon were forced to leave their homes and hearths in search of some other occupations. Some of them began to sell grass, some became timber-merchants and some became cloth-merchants. Some of them became petty contractors while others took up clerical jobs (under the English Govt.) and were superannuated.

Not realising the true state of affairs regarding the hollow and unsubstantial pomp (of their position), they mistakenly believe that their ancestors acquired their kingdoms (the principalities) with the sole intention of providing for their comforts and luxuries. Being blinded by false notions of religion, and lacking the requisite skills and capacity to carry on the administration of their principalities (estates) independently, they became rank fatalists, and were invariably led by the nose by their (crafty) Brahmin administrators (estate-managers), and they spent their days in granting gifts of cows to Brahmins, and their nights in procreating fresh progeny. These princely chiefs were certainly in a position to (were eminently fitted to) take such steps and measures as would have benefited their Shudra caste-men (subjects), but what a pity it is that such a salutary thought never occurred to them (never swam in their ken.) And as long as these Princes do not get rid of the disastrous obsession that the Brahmins are gods-incarnate for them, well-meaning efforts and persuasion to disabuse them of this delusion would be absolutely useless (would be like building a rope of sands). And supposing for argument's sake, if some one were so inclined to challenge the baleful influence of the Brahmins and their outmoded religion so powerful was the hold of the wrong notions and disastrous tenets with which they were indoctrinated (by the Brahmins) right from their childhood, that the Princes rarely had the inclination or capacity to open their minds and reflect upon the fraudulent nature of the cunning and wicked religion. The personal advisors and administrators would not take kindly to (would certainly frown upon) some exceptional princely chiefs who were impartial, enterprising and imbued with a justifiable pride for their ancestral nobility and glory. Should any Princely chief be bold enough to permit me to explain the authentic position I shall be only too happy to place before him my point of view (to the best of my ability).

So be it ! If we study closely and scrutinise carefully the histories of the various countries of the world, we shall be struck by one salient and glaring fact that the condition of the ignorant (illiterate) and superstitious Shudra farmers of India is far worse than that of the farmers in other countries. Nay, it has reached a despicable level worse than the extreme plight of the beasts (of the field).

I need not point out that I have consulted many relevent works in English, Sanskrit and vernacular languages and drawn on my *personal knowldge* of the sad plight of my Shudrā and Ati-Shudrā brethren, as the foundation of my present book. It is quite clear that I would not have been able to write the present book without such valuable aid (as evidence for my book).

I have incorporated some of my researches as per my humble exertions, in the body of this book. I humbly request my learned and discriminating readers to excuse me for any defects, errors or drawbacks that they may find in this book and to accept it for what it is worth. On reading it carefully, if they find any portion of it as improper or baseless (false), or if they wish to suggest to me the names of books or references which would strengthen my thesis as adumbrated in the present book, they will kindly communicate the same to me through the columns of newspapers (the press). I shall acknowledge such help most gratefully and shall give them due weight when a second edition of the book will be brought out.

It's a pleasure to record here that when I visited Baroda, His Highness Shrimant Sayajirao Maharaj Gaikwad, Sena-Khas-Khel, Samsher Bahadur (of Baroda) found time from his very tight and busy schedule of administrative work, had this book read out to him by me. With spontaneous joy and deep appreciation, he heard it very carefully to the end. His Highness accorded a warm welcome to me and extended his royal hospitality to me during my stay there. Not only that, but he also bestowed on me a handsome gift of money out of his innate generosity. I am much beholden to His Highness for all these acts of kindness and generosity.

Many (respectable) Shudra gentlemen from Poona, Bombay, Thane, Junnar, Otur, Hadapsar, Wāngni, and Malis' Kurul have heard the contents of this book from my own lips (they had it read out to them by me personally) and have vouched for the veracity of the contents of the book. They have certified it accordingly under their own signatures and communicated the same to me personally.

18th July 1883,
Poona.

Jotirao Govindrao Phule
Member, Satya Shodhak Samaj.

Appendix 'A' to the "Cultivator's Whip-Cord"

(113) While I was engaged in writing *The Cultivator's Whip-Cord'*, I had occasion to talk to certain gentlemen (about the subject-matter), I quote below two such conversations, as specimens.

One who prided himself on being called a Maratha

On completing the writing of " *The Cultivator's Whip-Cord* " I was about to undertake some new project when a gentleman (whom I took for a Brahmin) donning a wheel-like circular Poona-turban came in and settled down comfortably before me, reclining against a bolster. He was closely scrutinising the articles of furniture and other furnishings in my office. (I could not immediately make out his caste. (If he were a Marwari (a money lender), then the three tufts of hair were not trailing out of his turban. If he were a tailor, then needles were not pricked in his turban. If he were a gold-smith then his chest was not protruding above the level of his arms, I could not say for certain that he was a Brahmin, as I had not heard him speak (even a few words). I was trying to guess from which class (caste) he hailed, when he turned to me and addressed me as follows :—" I hope you know who I am ?" To which I said 'No, Sir ! I haven't, the honour of knowing you personally. Kindly excuse ! " At which he said, "I belong to the Maratha class (clan, caste)" whereupon I said, You may be from the Maratha class, but what is your caste ? The gentleman said, " I am Maratha by caste)." I observed, "All the people residing in Maharashtra from the Brahmins down to the Mahārs are generally called Marathas. Your answer does not give me any indication about you exact caste". The gentleman—"You may call me (suppose me to be) a Kunbi (a farmer)".

Jotirao : "What profession or avocation do you follow (pursue)?

Gentleman : Long before Shrimant Appasaheb Maharaj of Satara [the younger brother of Shrimant Chhatrapati Pratapsingh Maharaj who was deposed from the throne of Satara by the English on 3rd September 1839. Appasaheb was installed on the Satara throne (gaddi) in his place] was infatuated with the beautiful concubine Bhagubai from Limb (a village about 7-8 km. to the north of Satara off the Satara-Pune highway) (ladies from our family) had succeeded in earning (extracting about Rs. two lakhs from Appasaheb Maharaj, with great ease. We (the members of our family) are maintaining ourselves with this handsome amount so earned, fairly comfortably. Since then we have had no dealings whatsoever with the royal family of Satara.

Jotirao : Why did you condescend to call on me, please ?

Gentleman : I don't want to beg any favours from you, Sir. But I understand that you are firmly of the view that the Govt. Departments are overcrowded with Brahmin officers who naturally exploit the (ignorant) farmers. You also believe, I take it, that if these officers were recruited from the ranks of the farmers, they will not, then, so exploit them (the farmers).

Jotirao : Yes, indeed ! I am of the firm opinion that if the Govt. Departments were manned by officers recruited from the ranks of the agriculturists in proportion to their numbers in the population, they will be less likely to exploit their caste-men. unlike the Brahimn officers.

Gentleman : How can you say so? Kindly convince me.

Jotirao : Just imagine (for argument's sake) that the Collector appoints you as a Police Sub-Inspector here. If your near relatives and neighbours—all of them farmers—are involved in same brawls and quarrels (resulting in assaults and blood-shed) and on the case being referred to you, you start investigating the true facts of the case. Will you address the accused persons rudely and insolently ? (Will you 'Thou-Thou' them?)

Gentleman : Never.

Jotirao : Why not ?

Gentleman : All of them happen to be my neighbours or close kith and kin (relatives). I have passed my days right from my childhood (I grew upto manhood) under their supervision (watch). How shall I, then, dare to address them rudely and insultingly ?

Jotirao : Supposing, you were to accept some bribes (illegal gratification) from some of your caste-men, will you dare find the others guilty of this malpractice and will you dare fine them or inflict corporal punishment on them ?

Gentleman : No, never. I willnever be guilty of such a sin.

Jotirao : Why not ?

Gentleman : Because my job as a Police Sub-Inspector is a passing thing (it is temporary, not eternal). Who can guarantee its permanence ? Some meddlesome (obsequious) menial may poison the ears of the Collector against me, and then I am liable to be sacked. But these accused persons are my close relatives—with whom the members of my family inter-dine and inter-marry. If I were so foolish as to antagonise them now, I shall find it extremely difficult to arrange the weddings of may sons and daughters. (I cant't afford to throw them on the merty of society as unmarried—condemn them as the religious devotees Wàghyās and Muralis—dedicated to the religious service

of Khandoba). My children as also theirs will have to live and work together all their lives. We are next-door neighbours. Our children and theirs play together. We draw water from the same well/river. Our farms border on theirs. Our cattle graze in the same common village-pasture. In times of emergency we borrow the scythes, the iron cross-bars or the weeding machines, the ropes, and sowing and other implements for tending the crops in the fields from one another. We borrow the services of he-buffaloes and bullocks from one another on the farms. The women-folk of our houses help one another with borrowing or giving on credit food-grains, salt or oil at the dead of night even. When any women in our households are delivered of babies, we rush to their aid and prepare temporary bath-sheds and dig trenches to sluice off the bath-water. We also hasten to provide them with cots. Our customs and rituals, our food-habits and modes of dress also are similar. We worship the same patron deity and we observe the same taboos and totems. When our houses are on fire, we rush to one another's aid to extinguish the said fires. The same funeral rites are observed among us. Formerly, all the funeral rites among the farmers were performed by themselves. It's only during the last thirty or forty years that they are performed under the guidance of the Brahmins). We help one another at funerals, and hasten to console the bereaved ones (the grown-ups and the children) and take food from our homes to them and share it with them from the same plates. (In other words, we are joined together by indissoluble ties from birth to death). Do you think that I would be so inhuman as to demand and accept bribes from my caste-men, and sow the seeds of eternal discord among our families ?

Jotirao : So you should reflect carefully on this state of affairs. The Brahmin officers are not related to the Shudra farmers on point of caste, and hence they practise many frauds and deceits on the helpless, oppressed and illiterate farmers, and so they very conveniently exploit them, unlike their own caste-men (the Brahmins). Does your conscience not support this hypothesis?

Gentleman : I am not in a position to opine on this problem just now, but I will make bold to state that the Shudrās have produced some learned (and educated) persons. How shameful it is that they never gather together and care to debate publicly about the various ways and means of warding off these calamities that afflict the peasants. Dear Sir, these dishonest cowards haunt the homes of prostitutes (concubines), and at the same time

lose no opportunity to criticise and curse the Brahmin officers (for their misdeeds). But in actual fact they serve as the lackeys of the Brahmin officers and conduct themselves in a most obsequious and officious manner to them.

Jotirao We have recently experienced a sad development. The (Brahmin) officers in the Education Department while recording their unanimous evidence before the Education Commission (generally known as the 'Hunter Commission' on Education, 1882), did not pay any attention to (neglected) the education of the (children of the) peasants, totally misled (threw dust in the eyes of) the Education Commission and tried to hoodwink the kind-hearted Governor-General himself.

It is no wonder, then that these weak-kneed, spineless, educated people from the Shudra community should have conducted themselves in that manner (referred to above).

They never pointed out the errors (lapses) of the Brahmin Officers (in the Education Department) (which they should have done). But if a Shudra did not bow down too servilely before a third-rate Brahmin clerk in the ordinary Agent's Office, he was pushed back to a remote corner at the back of the Annual Durbar, was given a garland of faded and dried flowers (generally offered to an itinerant preacher of sermons), would be sprinkled with a few drops of rose-water, rotten (low-quality) scents would be applied to his wrist and he would be bundled out with a couple of betel-leaves without lime. (In short, he would be humiliated at the *Annual Durbar* for his impudence). Am I not stating the truth? Why don't you answer me now? So be it! (as you please!) You should enquire closely into the true state of affairs, and thus equipped, come back to me to debate about (the behaviour of the) Brahmin officers (in the Government Departments) with me.

Gentleman : Now I am thoroughly convinced, Sir, that as all the Government Departments are flooded with Brahmin officers, this fact results in a great detriment not only to the illiterate peasants but also to the fair name of the enlightened (English) Government. What baffles me most is that the Director of Education (in the Department of Education) does not take any cognisance of this sorry state of affairs.

Jotirao : My dear friend, if you expect the Director of Education to look so closely into the intricacies and details of such malpractices, how would he be able to enjoy such a luxurious (and care-free) life?

Gentleman : Sir, if this is the deplorable condition (of the Shudrā under the enlightened regime of the English Government, you can never even imagine the magnitude of the oppression and injustice inflicted upon the illiterate (hapless) Shudra peasants during the rule of the infamous Peshwas. I shall take my leave of you now. Kindly hold me dear in your heart". Having said these words, the gentleman left my house.

Jotirao Govindrao Phule
Member, Satya Shodhak Samaj.

2nd November 1882,
Poona.

APPENDIX 'B'

A Shudra Sadhu (hermit) belonging to the Kabir Bhakti (devotion) Sect.

In the afternoon of the day after I completed the *Cultivator's Whip-cord* (Part Three), a Shudra Sadhu (hermit) from Bombay belonging to the Kabir Sect of Bhakti (devotion), came to my house and sat down on a bench in my courtyard. He was dressed in saffron clothes, had a necklace of basil leaves (round his neck), was garrulous, and was a frequent pilgrim of Pandharpur (sacred to Lord *Vitthal*) (*Vithoba*). On being informed of his arrival by my attendant, I came out (in the courtyard) and accosted him thus:—"What brings you to my place, O holy man? May I know your pleasure? (What is the nature of your work with me?) I would be pleased to know all about this."

Sadhu : Are you Mr. *Jotirao Phule*?

Jotirao : Yes, the person standing before you bears the appellation (nomenclature) of *Jotirao Phule.*

Sadhu : Very fine! You are a Hindu by religion, you have studied some (religious) books in English and, of late, you have undertaken a campaign to condemn (disparage, criticise) *Hinduism.* I have come to meet you to convince myself (to ascertain for myself) whether the four principal *Vedās*–(the Scriptures) of the Hindus are divine revelations (are composed by God himself).

Jotirao : Have you ever seen for yourself (with your own eyes) these four principal *Vedās* of the Hindus?

Sadhu : Yes, Sir, I have seen with my own eyes these four *Vedas* in the house of a Brahmin.

Jotirao : Can you provide (adduce) any convincing evidence to the effect that these *Vedās* were composed by the Almighty Himself?

Sadhu : There is no convincing proof (evidence) about this, other than the gossips (imaginary things) indulged in by the Brahmins.

Jotirao : Let it be! Now tell me, good man, if God has a concrete, physical shape (form).

Sadhu : How can God ever have a concrete physical shape? He is the abstract *Universal Soul.*

Jotirao : How did the *abstract Universal Soul,* then, create the four *Vedās*?

Sadhu : The Brahmins are best qualified (fitted) to answer your query. You had better catechize the Brahmins on this score.

Jotirao : Secondly, did God create (compose) the four *Vedās* with the object of redeeming (saving) the whole of mankind? (all human beings?).

Sadhu : Yes, God created (composed) the four *Vedās* with the (commendable) object of redeeming (saving) the whole of mankind.

Jotirao : *Thirdly,* in which language did God compose these four *Vedās*?

Sadhu : God composed the four Vedas in *Sanskrit,* of course.

Jotirao : *Fourthly,* kindly enlighten me–whether all the people inhabiting the four continents as also the various islands of the earth (globe) are conversant with (know) Sanskrit?

Sadhu : Very few people (persons) inhabiting our earth (the globe) are able to understand *Sanskrit.*

Jotirao : This fact proves conclusively that God did not create (compose) the four *Vedās* to redeem (save) the whole of mankind, as the earth (globe) is inhabited (peopled) by different peoples (nationalities) speaking scores of diverse languages. Most inhabitants of most other countries are ignorant of (do not know) *Sanskrit.* How can they, then, redeem themselves by studying the four *Vedās*? What do you have to say to this?

Sadhu : At the time that God created the four Vedas, all the inhabitants of all the continents and the islands comprising the earth (globe, universe) might have been speaking Sanskrit as the medium of communication (expression). That is why God created (composed) the four Vedas in Sanskrit. It may safely be conjectured that many diverse (different) languages may have come into vogue (practice) in course of time.

Jotirao : How is it that God did not know (realise) that such diverse languages would come in vogue in course of time, when He created (composed) the four *Vedās*? Does not this fact detract from His self-evident *Omniscience* and *Omnipresence*? Though the German scholar *Max Mueller* (representing other English and Scottish scholars) was well-versed in (well-acquainted with) the (lore of the) four *Vedās,* is it not strange that he did not embrace the Vedic religion (Hinduism) while roundly condemning his own religion (of Christianity)?

Sadhu : *Max Mueller* may, perhaps, have been averse to wearing the sacred white thread (across his shoulders) and to practise the ritual of bathing thrice a day and ceaselessly reciting the

Scriptures (of the Hindus) in the cold inhospitable climate (of Europe). That may have influenced his decision. But the real reason was best known to him alone. How can I hazard even a guess about it? (How can I say anything for certain about it?).

Jotirao : If, as you state, God had, indeed, created (composed) the four *Vedās* for the redemption (salvation) of the whole of mankind, then the Bhats (Brahmins) surely would not have forbidden the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās who were Hindus–to study the (sacred lore of the) four *Vedās*. This clearly proves that the Bhats (Brahmins) had transgressed (disobeyed, flouted) the dictates of God. How, then, is it that the Creator of the *Vedās* turned a blind eye to this trangression? (That he chose to do nothing about it, and quietly withdrew himself into a secluded corner?) Just imagine the great loss sustained by the Shudras and Ati-Shudrās all these years by this unjustifiable ban? Why should they, then, believe in the Almighty and in the four *Vedās* (supposedly creared by Him), and further, why should they call themselves as Hindus?

Sadhu : It is the contention of most Brahmins that they never forbade the *Shudrās* and *Ati-Shudrās* to study the four *Vedās*. Many Bhats–Brahmins take the trouble to repair to the houses of the (Christian) Padre's and teach them the four *Vedās*–for sheer mercenary considerations–namely, to earn their livelihood. The Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās (whom you mention) are so poor they that cannot afford to pay the fees for the study of the *Vedās*. (Their poverty is to blame). How can you blame the Brahmins for this state of affairs? (What else can they do in such circumstances?).

Jotirao : This (explanation of the Brahmins) clearly proves that you are totally ignorant of the craftiness (cunning, wily nature) of the Bhats (Brahmins). But let that pass. Am I then to understand that the (Christian). Padres who maintain them selves by performing religious functions are affluent enough to pay the fees for studying the four *Vedās* (from the Brahmin preceptors) ? And wonder of wonders, are the rulers (Princes) of Indian States-like the **Bhonsles, Scindias, Holkars** and **Gaikwads** so impoverished that they cannot afford the luxury (payment of fees) of studying the four *Vedās* (from the Brahmins) ? How is it that not even one of these rulers has got the means (financial competence) to enable his sons to study the *Vedās* (by paying the necessary fees)? Do you mean to say that all these afore-mentioned Princes are worse off (poorer) then the European Padre's? O holy man! A number of (Brahmin) Vedic scholars, Sastris, Joshis and retailers of religious fables often frequent the Courts

of these 'Shudra' princes, and these credulous Princes are so overwhelmed and captivated by their ceaseless sermons and rituals that sometimes one of them generously bestows a Jāgir (a principality) on the followers of Ramdas' cult.! Another Prince is liberal enough to feed choicest victuals (bundi-laddus) to the medicant Bhats-(Brahmins) congregated at places of pilgrimage for a whole month at a time. A third one lavishes circular golden trinkets on the Bramhins in Poona. This proves that not all the Shudrā (Princes) are impoverished. It it too much to expect that at least one of these Brahmin beneficiaries (of the munificence of the Princes) should have used his good offices and persuaded (prevailed upon) one of these Princes to open (primary) schools, for the children of their Shudrā subjects in a number of villages, so that a couple of scholars at least could have been produced from these schools ? The European Padres though foreigners and Christians are far better (a thousand-fold) than these Bhats (Brahmins). The Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās of India are leading miserable lives under the tyranny and thraldom of the Brahmins for thousands of years. In order to liberate these Shudras and Ati-Shudrās from this thraldom, these **Christian missionaries** have begged for and collected substantial donations from their countrymen, and opened schools in the Princes' States for the children of their Shudrā and Ati-Shudrā subjects- who hail from the same castes to which the Scindias, Holkars, Gaikwads etc. belong. These Schools have produced many scholars-who are in every way the equals of the Brahmin scholars produced by the Government-aided schools for them. The Shudra scholars are now occupying high stations (positions) in Government service, and are shouldering the responsibilities as advocates and Government officers-alongside the Brahmin Officers and advocates with great distinction. Surely they must have realised the vast difference between their past miserable conditions and their present commendable and progressive condition (way of life). But we are constrained to observe that these Shudras are very much accursed and undiscerning (un-discriminating) indeed, for though they have received so much valuable aid and assistance at the hands of the English Government, they do not seem to cherish a keen desire to liberate themselves from the trammels (of the cunning Brahmins). Being apprehensive that they may lose the empty 'pomp and circumstance' (their luxurious ways of life and the empty ceremonial of rank and pelf) they demean themselves (are content with) before the Brahmin officers by currying favour with them (by genuflecting before them servilely) and think that to be the *summum bonum* of their careers. And thus they are totally lost in their own conceit (and a mistaken sense of the goal of life).

Sadhu : If this be the state of affairs (of the Shudrās), why don't you, Sir, then approach these (Shudra) Indian Princes and other—Shudra noblemen (Sardārs and Jāgirdārs) and most humbly request them (pray unto them) that they should be graciously pleased to open a number of (primary) schools in the villages in their States and enable the children of their Shudrā subjects to get the healing balm of education ?

Jotirao : O worthy Sir, the Courts (Darbars) of these Indian Princes are so much dominated by the Brahmin Officers that it would be impossible for a humble social worker like me to seek an audience with the ruler (of the State) to ventilate the Shudrās' grievances.

Sadhu : How can you say so? There is a concrete illustration of *Kusha Ghongade* from Poona. This Ghongade was acting as an accompanist on the stringed instrument and singing sweetly in the folk-plays presented by the ensemble of nautch-boys at Baroda at the various performances presented in that city). He earned thousands of Rupees by his skilful performance in Baroda. If the ruler of Baroda encourages folk-artists and singers, as stated above, do you think it would be so difficult to secure an audience with His Highness and acquaint him with the sad plight of his own caste-men (the Shudrās in Western Maharashtra)? You will certainly succeed in your mission, Sir.

Jotirao : Those who are in charge of the administration of the State (the Diwan and other officers) do fervently wish that the Prince should be addicted to song and dance and other types of entertainment such as folk-plays etc. Once they (the Princes) are so addicted, these officers at the Court have full freedom to run the affairs of the State as they like, and thus, they can feather their own nests without let or hindrance. They also prevail upon the Princes to arrange grand banquets in honour of the European (English) officers (dignitaries) in the State. If the Prince were to accept and act upon the sage advice and counsel of persons like me, it would naturally harm the interests of the coterie of Court Officers. If the ruler (of the State) were to spend money from the State exchequer on providing education to the children of the Shudra farmers (in the State), they would naturally become high responsible officers (dignitaries) (in place of the Brahmin officers). Thus the children of the Brahmin officers' caste-men would be driven to undertake hard, dull and onerous agricultural operations—such as ploughing (the fields). They will, thus, be forced to soil their (tender) hands with the mud and mire of the farms.

Sadhu : I never dremt that the Brahmin Officers were capable of (would stoop so low as to) such villainy (stratagems, wicked designs etc). But having heard your lucid exposition in this

behalf, now I am quite convinced of it. When the children (princes) of the Shudra rulers (of Indian States) come of age (attain the age of majority), these shrewd (wicked) Brahmin Court—Officers presume to address (unsolicited) letters to the British Government (the Governor or the Viceroy) to the effect that these princes are not capable of shouldering the onerous administrative resposibilities of the said states, and hence advise the English authorities not to entrust the State-administration to them (the princes). They adopt this (immoral) course of action, for they hope that thereby the English authorities would be impressed with their (the Brahmin Officers') cleverness and would also take note of the weakness (inefficiency, incompetence) of the said princes. They hope to be entrusted with the administration of the State. On assuming the charge of the administration, it is quite possible (probable) that they would lead the innocent princes by their noses (as if they were monkeys) and would parade them at the residences of the English authorities *by day*. They would also see to it that these princes were addicted to song, dance and concerts and various folk-plays *by night*. Thus they would have an excellent opportunity to squander the princes' wealth recklessly.

Jotirao : So long as the Shudrā rulers of Indian States do not realise their folly (do not come to their senses) and do not impart the healing balm of education (the elixir of life) to their own children (princes) as also to their subordinate officers drawn from the Shudrā stratum of society and do not train them to shoulder the high responsibilities of office, the Brahmin Officers in the respective states (of the Shudrā rulers) would continue to fleece the administration and practise their nefarious trade as before. Narrating these nefarious activities (of the Brahmins) is but time wasted. The (illiterate) Shudrās are expiating their past sins (are suffering for their past lapses) and I dare say the Brahmin Officers will have to pay the penalty in full, for their blatant past sins one day (in the fullness of time, at the appropriate time.) (The wheel will, surely, come full circle, sooner or later)

Sadhu : May I take my leave of you now, Sir?

Jotirao : As you please. Good-bye!

Joti Govind Phule
Member, Satya Shodhak Samaj.

Poona 6th April 1883.

Pandita Ramabai cocked a snook at the orthodox, taboo-ridden Hindu religion (by embracing Christianity). So a cunning (wicked) cowardly Brahmin scholar (who prefers to remain anonymous) is showering choicest abuses on her.

A LETTER TO THE MARĀTHI LITERARY CONFERENCE

(Mahatma Phule had sent a letter, through Mr. Justice M.G. Ranade, to the Marāthi Literary Conference. It is reproduced here from the ' Dnāynodaya ' a Marathi Christian fortnightly (dated 11th June 1885)

Sir,

I am in due receipt of your kind letter, along with the circular, dated the 13th inst. But my dear bustling busybody of a big brother, please note that there are some people (in Maharashtra) who do not think dispassionately about the problem of the Human Rights of all human beings and who are unwilling to grant them those rights openly and voluntarily, and if their present behaviour is any indication, they are not likely to grant them those Human Rights even in the future. (Please note that) the Societies established by us and the books published by us are diametrically opposed to the Societies founded by the above-mentioned (retrograde) people and to the contents of the books published by them. They have designedly and wickedly suppressed (omitted) from their spurious sacred books the shameful episode (event) of how their ancestors subjugated us (the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās) and converted us into serfs, to wreak their vengeance on us (vindictively). Their ancient and mischievous Scriptures will bear ample testimony to this our charge. The Brahmin authors who are hopelessly out of touch with the grim reality on the ground (who dwell in ivory towers, who are visionaries, who are just wiseacres), and the Brahmin orators who wax eloquent at their coteries and public meetings, are surely ignorant of the harrowing hardships which the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās have had to undergo all these years. The Founder of the *'Sarvajanik Sabha'* (Public Social Organisation' founded in Poona in 1870) knows all about this sorry state of affairs. But he turned a blind eye to this tragic situation, as he had to guard his own ephemeral interests as also those of his children. So as soon as he retired from the (English) Govt. service on a pension, most surprisingly and regrettably, he became a rank communalist, a confirmed idolator and utterly taboo–ridden and began to look down upon his Shudra and Ati-Shudrā brethren. He went one step further. He regarded it as a stark heresy (as an unmitigated sin or pollution) even to touch the paper currency (printed by the Govt. which had sanctioned him his pension) even after taking his ceremonial ablutions etc. So it is useless to expect these (retrograde) Aryan Brahmins to exert themselves for the prosperity of this hapless land of ours! So be it! (We should now resolve) that we Shudras will not be deceived (hoodwinked) by the false promises of the Brahmins

who have battened themselves by exploiting us (Shudrās). We Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās must deliberate carefully and conclude (decide) that we do not stand to gain anything by joining hands with them (the Brahmin authors). If those big bullies sincerely desire that all of us should be united (be of one mind), then they should strive to find ways and means of promoting eternal fraternal love and amity among all human beings (mankind) and they should publish it in book-form. Negligence and apathy on our part at this critical moment will be only at our peril. I leave it now to their (the Shudras' and Atishudrās') sweet will and pleasure. This tiny epistle of mine which embodies my views (on this vital point) may please be forwarded to the Marathi Literary Conference for its earnest consideration. Please accept this first salutation of an elderly person tendered in good faith.

Your friend,
JOTIRAO G. PHULE
('Dnāyanodaya', dated 11th June, 1885).

A Poem by Mahatma Phule, which was hitherto unpublished

[Brought to light for the first time by Dr. Y.D. Phadke and printed in the 'Maharashtra Times' (Sunday edition dated *23rd September 1990*). It contains thirteen stanzas].

A Peasant Woman (Kulambin)

(1)

The Shudrā's wife has to sit at the grinding stones (to grind the corn into flour) at the first cock–crow (at early dawn). Her husband is awakened by the noise (sound) of the rural ditties she sings while grinding the corn, and takes his bullock to graze in the pasture. She has to sweep the cow-shed, collect the cow-dung in baskets and carry the whole lot in baskets on her head and deposit them on the dunghill. Though she does not lack in any virtues, the cunning Brahmin calls her by the contemptuous name of 'a peasant woman', *says Joti.*

(2)

She kneads the jowar-flour and beats (pats) it into pieces of bread, at sun-rise. (It is an earthen-ware hearth, with one central opening where the fuel-wood (cow-dung etc) is fed, and it has one or two more openings on either side on which cooking pots can be placed. They are known as 'Awails' or Wails'. On the central (main) open space the oven or other cooking pots can be placed. Thus these two or three openings can be used for cooking simultaneously). She cooks curry in a pot conveniently placed on either opening. Once the cooking is over, she puts the pieces of bread and the pot of curry in a basket, puts the basket on her head and proceeds to the farm. She works on the farm along with all others, and (cannot find time to) does not partake of food with them, but eats her food, on her return at home. She makes gifts of the corn to the beggars and the Brahmins, and thus maintains (feeds) the earth-gods (the Brahmins), *says Joti.*

(3)

There is rarely the ceremonial sweeping and sprinkling of water in the courtyard of a Shudrā's house. Nor is there the holy basil plant (Tulsi) in the courtyard. The Shudrā has no time for such frivolous tricks. She does not (find time to) comb her hair and her body is sticky with perspiration. She hates all finery and finicking . She has to make do with one rough (home-spun) sari, and is quite content with porridge and butter–milk. The Bhats laugh at the Bhat widow and (unnecessrily) blame her (for her plight), *says Joti.*

(4)

She has to carry the pails (pots) of water at her waist, and has to mix the dry leaves (rubbish) in the cow-dung. She tucks up her sari carefully and mixes the cow-dung evenly with her bare feet. She, then, turns this into cow-dung cakes (pats) in the burning sun. The poor hard-working peasant-woman cannot afford the luxury of sitting on a swing in the cool shade like the Bhat woman. (The Brahmins) call such a hard-working woman as a 'peasant-woman' and lord it over others (as masters), *says Joti.*

(5)

Carrying cow-dung cakes in a meshed-fabric of twine (or rope) on her head, and balancing her tiny child on her back, the Shudra woman wanders from lane to lane hawking the said cow-dung cakes, for her maintenance. She does not worship any idols like a Bhatji. She walks erect and dignified and wears an-ornament in her hair. The cunning (wicked) Brahmin calls her by the disparaging name of 'a peasant-woman', which is really an affront to any human being, *says Joti.*

(6)

She walks behind the sowing implement, sowing tur (a pulse) and, thus, helps her husband in his sowing operation. She helps her husband faithfully in stormy wind or driving rain. She holds the string to help (her husband) and plants the saplings at the marked portions (of the string) (in the black soil). The untruthful (false) Brahmin calls her by the disparaging name of a 'peasant-woman', who, in fact, is very industrious (hard-working), *says Joti.*

(7)

The wives of the Kshatriyās (farmers) have to tighten their stomach (with a piece of cloth) and remove the weeds (grass) (in the crops) in the field. She is so busy with her work in the field (so lost is she in her work) that she forgets even to suckle her child which cries piteously. She munches the long (chawali) beans when she picks them up in the course of her work (on the farm), and then, goes to suckle her child. She sells the grass (which she has mown) and contributes her mite to defray the family expenses. Thus she gives an object-lesson to the Bhat woman, *says Joti.*

(8)

The wives of the Kshatriyas (the farmers) enter their farms and remove the weeds and rank grass with their sickles. They take out the weeds and feed them as fodder to the bullocks.

They tie the remaining rank grass in a bundle, and carry it on their heads to the (grass)-market. They purchase the pressed oil-cakes (cakes prepared after crushing the oil seeds) to be used as fodder for the bullocks. The (idle) Brahmin calls the hard-working, tired peasant-woman by the disparaging name of a 'peasant woman', *says Joti.*

(9)

She helps her husband to cut the ripe ears of corn and to take them to the circular harvesting spot (frame) dug into the earth. She sweeps it and covers it with a thin coating of cow-dung promptly. She keeps the baskets of corn and chaff trodden by the bullocks from the ears of corn, on a three-legged tall stool, to be winnowed in the wind, and (while they are being winnowed by her husband) she deftly shifts the chaff from the grains of corn with a rough broom energetically. She carefully collects the left-overs (of the corn) from the chaff, to be pounded into the mortar or ground by the grinding stones at home for the morning porridge (for the family). The drone (shirker) of a Brahmin calls the hard-working one by the disparaging name of a 'peasant-woman' *says Joti.*

(10)

The Bhat woman does not feed the crops in the fields with the human excreta (night-soil) as (golden) manure, but flaunts a golden ring and a serpent-like (coiled) golden ornament in her coiffure. She does not follow the cattle, collecting the cow-dung, nor does she turn the cow-dung into dung-cakes (pats) because of her over-weening pride. She does not grind the corn in the Shudrā's house, nor does she sprinkle water in the courtyard of the Shudrā, to earn her livelihood. She thinks it below her dignity to sweep the Shudra's courtyard, not does the cover the floor of the Shudra's house with a coating of cow-dung, *says Joti.*

(11)

The Bhat woman does not apply scents and scented pastes (and oils) to the person of the Shudra female nor does she massage her body and bath her (with hot water). She does not comb the Shudra female's hair, nor does she dry her body (after bath) nor does she wash her sari and her blouses. She does not clean the plate from which the Shudra female has eaten (her meals), nor does she tend her shoes in her house. The Bhat female does not condescend to look after the Shudra's children, nor does she caress them, s*ays Joti.*

(12)

The Bhat woman does not work as (a daily-wage) labourer on the Shudrā's farm, and hence does not cut the standing crop (ears of corn) on their farms. She does not carry the sheaves of corn to the (circular) threshing floor, nor does she cut the ears of corn with them. She does not hand over the baskets (containing corn and chaff) to be winnowed (in the wind) to the farmers, nor does she sift the partially trodden ears of corn (by the bullocks) with a rough broom. She refuses to work as a (daily-wage) labourer at the (circular) threshing floor in the Shudrās' farms, nor does she give up assuming airs (or flaunting and finicking), *says Joti.*

(13)

The Bhat woman does not follow the plough on the farm, removing the weeds and rank grass (thrown up by the plough) in the wake of the plough (and the oxen). She does not break the clods of earth nor does she carry baskets of manure on her head. She does not cut the grass and other weeds (with a sickle) in the crop nor does she feed the bullocks with the green fodder, nor does she carry the bundles of grass to sell them in the (grass) market. The Bhat woman despises to work as a labourer on the Shudrā's farm, and indulges in idle tricks and finery, *says Joti.*

Opinion from Joteerao Govindrao Phule, on Note No. I, by Mr. B. M. Malabari on Infant Marriage in India.

I concur with Mr. B. M. Malabari's laudable undertaking, and hope that something may be done by our enlightened Government to alleviate the miserable state of the deluded people of this country. Although Mr. M. B. Malabari is not pressed under the immediate burden of our customs and manners, invented by Aryan Shastra makers, he treated the subject so remarkably well that the Shudrathi-Shudrās and Brahmin widows will thank him in future undoubtedly. I also now beg to add a few remarks on the middle and lower orders, the downtrodden aborigines of this country. In the course of marriage, if any slight dispute takes place between the parties, the poor girl has to suffer all her life-time. After the marriage is over, should a defect in her family happen to come to the notice of the boy's father, the innocent girl is considered an outcaste. If the boy is younger than the girl, she is not well fed, clothed and cared for properly, nay, she is not allowed to remain with her rich parents. If her father-in-law be ignorant and poor, the girl, not being fed well, is stunted in her growth. In short she is more heavily loaded with work for days and nights than American slaves. Thus she is so unbearably tyrannized that she is obliged to put an end to her life by committing suicide ; and the crime is very often hushed up by bribing the villlage Patel, Coolkerni (the quarrel monger) and Policemen. Many poor parents on the bride-groom's side are thus, by incurring debts for marriages, ruined on account of the premature deaths of their daughters-in-law. Besides the husband boy, on coming to his proper senses, does not like his wife and marries one of his own liking. Being thus accustomed, he is induced to marry two, three, or four wives at a time in succession, and thus renders his whole family discontented, abusive and quarrel-some. These ignorant wives are not only obliged to poison each other, but sometimes their own husband. Now the enlightened Hindu of Bengal has made excellent suggestions to University graduates, and these, as they suppose would be a fair beginning for the educated class, but, I think, their suggestions are not *universal and applicable to all the classes of Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās,* because very few of the former attend the University and the latter are not at all admitted even into vernacular schools and allowed to sit and learn with the higher class boys. In conclusion, unless our wise Government use some compulsory measures, the ignorant, middle and lower classes will not come to their proper sense, because the so-called higher classes of Hindus, who hold responsible posts under Governmnt, have by their cunning and shrewd ways, purposely misguided them in matters of *religion*

and *politics*. I, therefore, suggest that Government should rule that boys under nineteen years of age, and girls under eleven, should not be allowed to marry. In case they do, some reasonable tax may be levied on the parents of the parties married. and the money thus obtained should be used in the education of the middle and lower classes of Hindus. But the education should not be transmitted through the medium of *Brahmin teachers*, for while educating, they create in the minds of the pupils wrong religious ideas and lead them astray (Even the subsidiary kings, Sindia, Holkar, and others are, we find, cheated in the open daylight under the pretence of invented religion, and are induced to extract tax indiscriminately from the cultivators without giving them timely allowances. But there is strong hope that His Highness the present Ruler of Baroda will try his utmost to educate and better the condition of the ignorant cultivators as His Highness has received a good and sound English education.

Opinion from Jotteerao Govindrao Phule, on Note No. II, by Mr. B. M. Malabari on Enforced Widowhood.

Now I touch upon the most delicate subject of enforced widowhood upon Brahmin women. The partial Aryan Institution inconsiderately allows polygamy to males, which causes them to fall into new habits of wickedness. When his lust is satisfied with his legal wives, he for novelty's sake haunts the houses of public women. He then contracts venereal diseases from them and is obliged to seek medical assistance at an exhorbitant cost, for himself and his wives. When medical treatment ceases to cure him and his wives, he loses all hopes of getting children. In this deplorable condition of his life if the lewd husband finds his own wife to go out during night he suspects her of leading a vicious course and so, punishing her severely, turns her out. In old age in order to obliterate the stigma upon his character, the shameless fellow becomes a religious man and hires public harlots to dance and sing in the temples with a view to venerating the stone idols, for his own satisfaction. After the death of this wicked man, his young and beautiful wife is not allowed by the same Aryan Institution to remarry. She is stripped of her ornaments ; she is forcibly shaved by her near relatives ; she is not well fed ; she is not properly clothed ; she is not allowed to join pleasure parties, marriages or religious ceremonies. In fact she is bereaved of all the worldly enjoyments, nay, she is considered lower than a culprit or a mean beast.

Moreover, the Aryan Institution enjoins Brahmin males to marry even the lower class girls during the life-time of his first wife ; but his real own sister is prohibited to remarry, after the demise of her first husband. Such partial and unjust prohibitions necessarily lead the helpless Aryan widow to commit horrible and heart-rending acts of atrocity. To prove the above assertion I insert the following instance. (One of my Brahmin friends named Rao Saheb Sudashive Bullal Gowndey, who was an officer in the Inam Commission, employed in his house a Brahmin widow as cook, whose name was Kashibai. The poor Kashibai was a well-behaved and beautiful young woman of a respectable family. She was a chaste woman. She served several months in his house. But in his neighbourhood there lived a shrewd and cunning Shashtriboova of a Brahmin caste, who tried his utmost to mislead this ignorant woman. Kashibai at first resisted his inducement but at last she fell victim to his desire and immediately became pregnant. Afterwards by the persuasion of her paramour, she tried several poisonous drugs to commit abortion, but all her attempts failed. After nine months were completed, Kashibai gave birth to a beautiful son and for

the sake of her disgrace she murdered the innocent infant with a knife and the corpse was thrown into the well behind the house of her master. Two days after she was arrested by the police on suspicion, tried before the Session Court in Poona and was sentenced to transportation for life. This crime Kashibai committed, that her character may not be spoilt among the Brahmin community. Her case brought to the notice of the public the unjust and partial character of the Aryan Institution, and so the people were struck with horror. Although my means were not sufficient to defray my expense, yet I was compelled to establish a foundling house, in my own compound in Poona, for the Brahmin community immediately after Kashibai's trial was over. The enclosed copy of printed notices was then pasted on the walls of the corners of streets, where the Brahmins reside. From its commencement up to the present time, thirty-five pregnant widows came to his house and were delivered of children, of whom five are living and thirty died by the injuries done to them while in the womb by the poisonous drugs which the mothers must have taken with a view to concealing their pregnancy. Many of the beautiful and helpless ignorant young widows of the respectable Brahmin families have turned out private and public prostitutes on account of this wretched system. How abominable and degrading is the system of Aryan Institution, which compels Brahmin widows to drag their lives in so miserable and shameless ways, that even modesty shrinks back to enter into particular details! In conclusion, I most respectfully crave the favour of your enlightened English Government to remove the tyranny of enforced widowhood, exercised upon the helpless women, by the relentless system of Aryan religious institution. I, therefore, propose that no barbers should be allowed to shave the unfortunate Brahmin widows. It is quite evident from the partial Aryan religious institution that, when it prohibits the widows from remarrying, why the widowers should be allowed to remarry ? If the favour be shown to the latter then the poor widows must of necessity be permitted to remarry. There is no doubt that the selfish and wicked law-givers must have added such unjust and non-sensical clauses into their Shastras with malice towards the female sex.

Memorial Addressed To The Education Commission.

A Statement for the information of the Education commission

My experience in educational matters is principally confined to Poona and the surrounding villages. About 25 years ago, the missionaries had established a female school at Poona but no indigeneous school for girls existed at the time. I, therefore, was induced, about the year 1854,* to establish such a school, and in which I and my wife worked together for many years. After some time I placed this school under the management of a committee of educated natives. Under their auspices two more schools were opened in different parts of the town. A year after the institution of the female schools, I also established an indigeneous mixed school for the lower classes, especially the Mahars and Mangs. Two more schools for these classes were subsequently added. Sir Erskine Perry, the president of the late Educational Board, and Mr. Lumsdain, the then Secretary to Government, visited the female schools and were much pleased with the movement set on foot, and presented me with a pair of shawls. I continued to work in them for nearly 9 to 10 years, but owing to circumstances, which it is needless here to detail, I seceded from the work. These female schools still exist, having been made over by the committee to the Educational Department under the management of Mrs. Mitchell. A school for the lower classes, Mahars and Mangs, also exists at the present day, but not in a satisfactory condition. I have also been a teacher for some years in a mission female boarding school. My principal experience was gained in connection with these schools. I devoted some attention also to the primary education available in this Presidency and have had some opportunities of forming an opinion as to the system and *personnel* employed in the lower schools of the Educational Department. I wrote some years ago a Marathi pamphlet exposing the religious practices of the Brahmins and incidentally among other matters, adverted therein to the present system of education, which by providing ampler funds for higher education tended to educate Brahmins and the higher classes only, and to leave the masses wallowing in ignorance and poverty. I summarised the views expressed in the book in an English Preface attached thereto, portions of which I reproduce here so far as they relate to the present enquiry :—

"Perhaps a part of the blame in bringing matters to this crisis may be justly laid to the credit of the Government. Whatever

*May be a printing error. It should be 1851.

may have been their motives in providing ampler funds and greater facilities for higher education, and neglecting that of the masses, it will be acknowledged by all that in justice to the latter, this is not as it should be. It is an admitted fact that the greater portion of the revenues of the Indian Empire are derived from the ryot's labour—from the sweat of his brow. The higher and richer classes contribute little or nothing to the state exchequer. A well-informed English writer states that "our income is derived, not from surplus profits, but from capital; not from luxuries, but from the poorest necessaries. It is the product of sin and tears."

"That Government should expend profusely a large portion of revenue thus raised, on the education of the higher classes, for it is these only who take advantage of it, is any thing but just or equitable. Their object in patronising this virtual high class education appears to be to prepare scholars who, it is thought, would in time vend learning without money and without price. If we can inspire, say they, the love of knowledge in the minds of the superior classes, the result will be a higher standard of morals in the cases of the individuals, a large amount of affection for the British Government, and unconquerable desire to spread among their own countrymen the intellectual blessings which they have received.

"Regarding these objects of Government the writer above alluded to, states that we have never heard of philosophy more benevolent and more Utopian. It is proposed by men who witness the wondrous changes brought about in the Western world, purely by the agency of popular knowledge, to redress the defects of the two hundred millions of India, by giving superior education to the superior classes and to them only. We ask the friends of Indian Universities to favour us with a single example of the truth of their theory from the instances which have already fallen within the scope of their experience. They have educated many children of wealthy men and have been the means of advancing very materially the worldly prospects of some of their pupils. But what contribution have these made to the great work of regenerating their fellowmen ? How have they begun to act upon the masses? Have any of them formed classes at their own homes or elsewhere, for the instruction of their less fortunate or less wise countrymen ? Or have they kept their knowledge to themselves, as a personal gift, not to be soiled by contact with the ignorant vulgar? Have they in any way shown themselves anxious to advance the general interests and repay the philanthropy with patriotism ? Upon what grounds is it asserted that the best way to advance the moral and intellectual welfare of the people is to raise the standrad of instruction among the higher classes ? A glorious argument this for aristocracy,

were it only tenable. To show the growth of the national happiness, it would only be necessary to refer to the number of pupils at the colleges and the lists of academic degrees. Each Wrangler would be accounted a national benefactor; and the existence of Deans and Proctors would be associated, like the game laws and the ten-pound franchise, with the best interests of the constitution.

"One of the most glaring tendencies of Government system of high class education has been the virtual monopoly of all the higher offices under them by Brahmins. If the welfare of the Ryot is at heart, if it is the duty of Government to check a host of abuses, it behoves them to narrow this monopoly day by day so as to allow a sprinkling of the other castes to get into the public services. Perhaps some might be inclined to say that it is not feasible in the present state of education. Our only reply is that if Government look a little less after higher education which is able to take care of itself and more towards the education of the masses there would be no difficulty in training up a body men every way qualified and perhaps far better in morals and manners.

"My object in writing the present volume is not only to tell my Shudra brethren how they have been duped by the Brahmins, but also to open the eyes of Government to that pernicious system of high class education, which has hitherto been so persistently followed, and which statesmen like Sir George Campbell, the present Lieutenant—Governor of Bengal, with broad universal sympathies, are finding to be highly mischievous and pernicious to the interests of Government. I sincerely hope that Government will ere long see the error of their ways, trust less to writers or men who look through highclass spectacles, and take the glory into their own hands of emancipating my Shudra brethren from the trammels of bondage which the Brahmins have woven around them like the coils of a serpent. It is no less the duty of each of my Shudra brethren as have received any education, to place before Government the true state of their fellowmen and endeavour to the best of their power to emancipate themselve from Brahmin thraldom. Let there be schools for the Shudras in every village; but away with all Brahmin school-masters ! The Shudras are the life and sinews of the country, and it is to them alone, and not to the Brahmins, that Government must ever look to tide over their difficulties, financial as well as political. If the hearts and minds of the Shudras are made happy and contented, the British Government need have no fear for their loyalty in the future."

PRIMARY EDUCATION

There is little doubt that primary education among the masses in this Presidency has been very much neglected. Although the number of primary schools now in existence is greater than those existing a few years ago, yet they are not commensurate to the requirements of the community. Government collect a special cess for educational purposes, and it is to be regretted that this fund is not spent for the purposes for which it is collected. Nearly nine-tenths of the villages in this Presidency, or nearly 10 lakhs of children, it is said, are without any provision, whatever, for primary instruction. A good deal of their poverty, their want of self-reliance, their entire dependence upon the learned and intelligent classes, is attributable to this deplorable state of education among the peasantry.

Even *in towns* the Brahmins, the Purbhoos, the hereditary classes, who generally live by the occupation of pen, and the trading classes seek primary instruction. The cultivating and the other classes, as a rule, do not generally avail themselves of the same. A few of the latter class are found in primary and secondary schools, but owing to their poverty and other causes they do not continue long at school. As there are no special inducements for these to continue at school, they naturally leave off as soon as they find any menial or other occupation. In *villages* also most of the cultivating classes hold aloof, owing to extreme poverty, and also because they require their children to tend cattle and look after their fields. Besides an increase in the number of schools, special inducements in the shape of scholarships and half-yearly or annual prizes, to encourage them to send their children to school and thus create in them a taste for learning, is most essential. I think primary education of the masses should be made compulsory up to a certain age, say at least 12 years. Muhammadans also hold aloof from these schools, as they somehow evince no liking for Marathi or English. There are a few Muhammadan primary schools where their own language is taught. The *Mahars, Mangs,* and other lower classes are practically excluded from all schools owing to caste prejudices as they are not allowed to sit by the children of higher castes. Consequently special schools for these have been opened by Government. But these exist only in large towns. In the whole of Poona and for a population exceeding over 5,000 people, there is only one school, and in which the attendance is under 30 boys. This state of matters is not at all creditable to the educational authorities. Under the promise of the Queen's Proclamation I beg to urge that Mahars, Mangs, and other lower classes, where their number is large enough, should have separate schools for them, as they are not allowed to attend the other schools owing to caste prejudices,

In the present state of education, payment by results is not at all suitable for the promotion of education amongst a poor and ignorant people, as no taste has yet been created among them for education. I do not think any teacher would undertake to open schools on his own account among these people, as he would not be able to make a living by it. Government schools and special inducements, as noted above, are essential until such a taste is created among them.

With regard to the few Government primary schools that exist in the Presidency, I beg to observe that the primary education imparted in them is not at all placed on a satisfactory or sound basis. The system is imperfect in so far as it does not prove practical and useful in the future career of the pupils. The system is capable of being developed up to the requirement of the community, if improvements that will result in its future usefulness be effected in it. Both the teaching machinery employed and the course in instruction now followed, require a thorough remodelling.

(a) The teachers now employed in the primary schools are almost all Brahmins ; a few of them are from the normal training college, the rest being all untrained men. Their salaries are very low, seldom exceeding Rs. 10, and their attainments also very meagre. But as a rule they are all unpractical men, and the boys who learn under them generally imbibe inactive habits and try to obtain service, to the avoidance of their hereditary or other hardy or independent professions. I think teachers from primary schools should be trained, as far as possible, out of the cultivating classes, who will be able to mix freely with them and understand their wants and wishes much better than a Brahmin teacher, who generally holds himself aloof under religious prejudices. These would, moreover, exercise a more beneficial unfluence over the masses than teachers of other classes, and who will not feel ashamed to hold the handle of a plough or the carpenter's adze when required, and who will be able to mix themselves readily with the lower orders of society. The course of training for them ought to include, besides the ordinary subjects, an elementary knowledge of agriculture and sanitation. The untrained teachers should, except when thoroughly efficient, be replaced by efficient trained teachers. To secure a better class of teachers and to improve their position, better salaries should be given. Their salaries should not be less than Rs. 12 and in larger villages should be at least Rs. 15 or 20. Associating them in the village polity as auditors of village accounts or registrars of deeds, or village postmasters or stamp vendors, would improve their status, and thus exert a beneficial influence over the people among whom they live. The schoolmasters

of village schools who pass a large number of boys should also get some special allowance other than their pay, as an encouragement to them.

(b) The course of instruction should consist of reading, writing Modi and Balbodh and accounts, and a rudimentary knowledge of general history, general geography and grammer, also an elementary knowledge of agriculture and a few lessons on moral duties and sanitation. The studies in the village schools might be fewer than those in larger villages and towns, but not less practical. In connection with lessons in agriculture, a small model farm, where practical instruction to the pupils can be given, would be a decided advantage and, if really efficiently managed, would be productive of the greatest good to the country. The text-books in use, both in the primary and Anglovernacular schools, require revision and recasting as much as they are not practical or progressive in their scope. Lessons on technical education and morality, sanitation and agriculture, and some useful arts, should be interspersed among them in progressive series. The fees in the primary schools should be As 1 to 2 from the children of cess-payers and non—cess—payers.

(c) The supervising agency over these primary schools is also very defective and insufficient. The Deputy Inspector's visit once a year can hardly be of any appreciable benefit. All these schools ought at least to be inspected quarterly if not oftener. I would also suggest the advisability of visiting these schools at other times and without any intimation being given. No reliance can be placed on the district or village officers owing to the multifarious duties devolving on them, as they seldom find time to visit them, and when they do, their examination is necessarily very superficial and imperfect. European Inspector's supervision is also occasionally very desirable, as it will tend to exercise a very efficient control over the teachers generally.

(d) The number of primary schools should be increased—

(1) By utilising such of the indigenous schools as shall be or are conducted by trained and certificated teachers, by giving them liberal grants-in-aid.

(2) By making over one half of the local cess fund for primary education alone.

(3) By compelling, under a statutory enactment, municipalities to maintain all the primary | schools within their respective limits.

(4) By an adequate grant from the provincial or imperial funds.

Prizes and scholarships to pupils, and capitation or other allowance to the teachers, as an encouragement, will tend to render these schools more efficient.

The Municipalities in large towns should be asked to contribute whole share of the expenses incurred on primary schools within the municipal areas. But in no case ought the management of the same to be entirely made over to them. They should be under the supervision of the Educational Department.

The municipalities should also give grants-in-aid to such secondary and private English schools as shall be conducted according to the rules of the Educational Department, where their funds permit, such grants-in-aid being regulated by the number of boys passed every year. These contributions from Municipal funds may be made compulsory by statutory enactment.

The administration of the funds for primary education should ordinarily be in the hands of the Director of Public Instruction.

But if educated and intelligent men are appointed on the local or district committees, these funds may be safely entrusted to them, under the guidance of the Collector, or the Director of Public Instruction. At present, the local boards consist of ignorant and uneducated men, such as Patels, Inamdars, Surdars, etc. who would not be capable of exercising any intelligent control over the funds.

INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS

Indigenous schools exist a good deal in cities, towns, and some large villages, especially where there is a Brahmin population. From the latest reports of Public Instruction in this Presidency, it is found that there are 1,049 indigenous schools with about 27,694 pupils in them. They are conducted on the old village system. The boys are generally taught the multiplication table by heart, a little Modi writing and reading, and to recite a few religious pieces. The teachers, as a rule, are not capable of effecting any improvements, as they are not initiated in the art of teaching. The fees charged in these schools range from 2 to 8 annas. The teachers generally come from the dregs of Brahminical society. Their qualifications hardly go beyond reading and writing Marathi very indifferently, and casting accounts up to the rule of three or so. They set up as teachers as the last resource of getting a livelihood. Their failure or unfitness in other callings of life obliges them to open schools. No arrangements exist in the country to train up teachers for indigenous schools. The indigenous schools could not be turned to any good account, unless the present teachers are

replaced by men from the training colleges and by those who pass the 6th standard in the vernaculars. The present teachers will willingly accept State aid, but money thus spent will be thrown away. I do not know any instance in which a grant-in-aid is paid to such a school. If it is being paid anywhere, it must be in very rare cases. In my opinion no grants-in-aid should be paid to such schools unless the master is a certificated one. But if certificated or competent teachers be found, grants-in-aid should be given and will be productive of great good.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The cry over the whole country has been for some time past that Government have amply provided for higher education, whereas that of the masses has been neglected. To some extent this cry is justified, although the classes directly benefited by the higher education may not readily admit it. But for all this no well-wisher of his country would desire that Government should, at the present time, withdraw its aid from higher education. All that they would wish is, that as one class of the body politic has been neglected, its advancement should form as anxious a concern as that of the other. Education in India is still in its infancy. Any withdrawal of State aid from higher education cannot but be injurious to the spread of education generally.

A taste for education among higher and wealthy classes such as the Brahmins and Purbhoos, especially those classes who live by the pen, has been created, and a gradual withdrawal of State aid may be possible so far as these classes are concerned; but in the middle and lower classes, among whom higher education has made no perceptible progress, such a withdrwal would be a great hardship. In the event of such withdrawal, boys will be obliged to have recourse to inefficient and sectarian schools, much against their wish, and the cause of education cannot but suffer. Nor could any part of such education be entrusted to private agency. For a long time to come the entire educational machinery, both ministerial and executive, must be in the hands of Government. Both the higher and primary education require all the fostering care and attention which Government can bestow on it.

The withdrawal of Government from schools or colleges would not only tend to check the spread of education, but would seriously endanger that spirit of neutrality which has all along been the aim of Government to foster, owing to the different nationalities and religious creeds prevalent in India. This withdrawal may, to a certain extent, create a spirit of self-reliance for local purposes in the higher and wealthy classes, but

the cause of education would be so far injured that the spirit of self-reliance would take years to remedy that evil. Educated men of ability, who do not succeed in getting into public service, may be induced to open schools for higher education on being assured of liberal grants-in-aid. But no one would be ready to do so on his own account as a means of gaining a livelihood, and it is doubtful whether such private efforts could be permanent or stable, nor would they succeed half so well in their results. Private schools, such as those of Mr. Vishnu Shastree Chiploonkar and Mr. Bhavey, exist in Poona, and with adequate grants-in-aid may be rendered very efficient, but they can never supersede the necessity of the high school.

The missionary schools, although some of them are very efficiently conducted, do not succeed half so well in their results, nor do they attract half the number of students which the high school attracts. The superiority of Government schools is mainly owing to the richly paid staff of teachers and professors which it is not possible for a private schools to maintain.

The character of instruction given in the Government higher schools is not at all practical, or such as is required for the necessities of ordinary life. It is only good to turn out so many clerks and schoolmasters. The Matriculation examination unduly engrosses the attention of the teachers and pupils, and the course of studies prescribed has no practical element in it, so as to fit the pupil for his future career in independent life. Although the number of students presenting for the Entrance examination is not at all large when the diffusion of knowledge in the country is taken into consideration, it looks large when the requirements of Government service are concerned. Were the education universal and within easy reach of all, the number would have been larger still, and it should be so, and I hope it will be so hereafter. The higher education should be so arranged as to be within easy reach of all, and the books on the subjects for the Matriculation examination should be published in the Government Gazette, as is done in Madras and Bengal. Such a course will encourgae private studies and secure larger diffusion of knowledge in the country. It is a boon to the people that the Bombay University recognises private studies in the case of those presenting for the Entrance examination. I hope, the University authorities will be pleased to extend the same boon to higher examinations. If private studies were recognised by the University in granting the degrees of B.A., M.A. &c., many young men will devote their time to private studies. Their doing so will still further tend to the diffusion of knowledge. It is found in many instances quite impossible to prosecute studies at the colleges for various reasons. If private studies be

recognised by the University, much good will be effected to the country at large, and a good deal of the drain on the public purse on account of higher education will be lessened.

The system of Government scholarships, at present followed in the Government schools, is also defective, as much as it gives undue encouragement to those classes only, who have already acquired a taste for education to the detriment of the other classes. The system might be so arranged that some of these scholarships should be awarded to such classes amongst whom education has made no progress.

The system of awarding them by competition, although abstractedly equitable, does not tend to the spread of education among other classes.

With regard to the question as to educated natives finding remunerative employments, it will be remembered that the educated natives who mostly belong to the Brahminical and other higher classes are mostly fond of service. But as the public service can afford no field for all the educated natives who come out from schools and colleges, and moreover the course of training they receive being not of a technical or practical nature, they find great difficulty in betaking themselves to other manual or remunerative employments. Hence the cry that the market is overstocked with educated natives who do not find any remunerative employment. It may, to a certain extent, be true that some of the professions are overstocked, but this does not show that there is no other remunerative employment to which they can betake themselves. The present number of educated men is very small in relation to the country at large, and we trust that the day may not be far distant when we shall have the present number multiplied a hundredfold and all be taking themselves to useful and remunerative occupations and not be looking after service.

In conclusion, I beg to request the Education Commission to be kind enough to sanction measures for the spread of female primary education on a more liberal scale.

Poona,
19th October 1882.

JOTEERAO GOVINDRAO PHOOLEY,
Merchant and Cultivator and
Municipal Commissioner,
Peth Joona Ganja.

[Education Commission, Bombay, Vol. II. Calcutta, 1884, pp. 140-154]

Our Brahmin-ridden Policy–Educational System

(Communicated) A Ballad.

The real owners (of the produce) have to suffer, and the Pathans (extortionist money-lenders) have a field-day. Children of un-deserving parents are being educated at the cost of the Shudrās. The Malis (gardeners) and the Kunbis (the farmers) toil and moil in the fields only to enrich (the Government) by paying the contributions and taxes, and, (as a result) remain half-naked. Little children have to tend the cattle (on the barren heaths) and the soles of their bare feet are scorched (by the sun's heat). Their parents pine *inwardly* as their children cannot take education, and they blame their ill-luck. (The Education Department) beggars (robs) the ryots by giving them false promises to educate (their children), and sends (appoints) only Brahmin teachers to man these Schools. The collect a few pupils, with the help of the Kulkarni (the traditional village accounts-clerk) and enter (a large) figure in their reports. They (the Brahmin teachers) regard teaching the children of the Mahārs (Ati-Shudrās, untouchables) as polluting (them), while they shake hands with the Englishmen (with great alacrity). The Brahmin teachers are not ashamed to treat these children as untouchables.

> Once upon a time, they (the untouchables) were your great enemies, but now you have turned them into your vassals (slaves)! Even the American (slave-owners) were put to shame (were ashamed of themselves) even though they did not regard themselves as earth-gods (as the Brahmins did here)

The Brahmin teachers glorify god Brahma in the course of their teaching, and at the same time, they criticise and condemn other religions. This is the usual method of their teaching. They teach (the tenets of) a false religion (heresies) skilfully to the Shudra children and indoctrinate their (innocent) minds with hatred for the Queen (Empress). Such crafty people are appointed as teachers (by the English Government) and children of undeserving parents are being educated at the cost of the Shudrās.

If the Brahmin children commit mistakes, the (Brahmin) teachers take special pains to teach them (again), and give nominal punishment to them. But if the Shudra children commit mistakes, the (Brahmin) teachers slap them and box their ears marcilessly. For fear of corporal punishment the Shudra children run away from the school. But the teachers take care to maintain the requisite number (of pupils) on the rolls. When the Educational Inspector visits the school, the

(Brahmin) teacher curries favour with him and bahaves in a most obsequious manner towards him. As the Educational Inspector is a Brahmin, the school teacher himself marks the attendance of the pupils. The Inspector gives the teacher an excellent grade and praises him to the skies in his inspection report. I describe only the gist briefly.

"The Shudras are very ignorant and foolish, and their children are not interested in taking education at all." Thus runs the report of the Inspector, a blatant lie. The Brahmins indulge in mutual admiration, and promote the interests of their own caste-men sedulously. It is a thousand pities that no one brings these guilty persons to book. In this scandalous manner the poor, ignorant Shudrās are systematically fleeced, and children of undeserving parents are being educated (at the cost of the Shudrās). The (Brahmin) teachers spend most of their time in religious observances and rites, and tiny tots mark the pupils' attendance on the roll. They while away the time by pretending to teach trash to the Shudrā children. This is how they discharge their duty as teachers. They come late to the school at eight a.m. and occupy the chairs (in the class-rooms). They teach the Brahmin pupils till ten o'clock, and gauge the time by sun-dial. Being (thoroughly) exhausted by their 'strenuous' exercise), they wipe away beads of perspiration from their brows, pat their foreheads gently, lean (recline) their (tired) heads gently on the table. They indulge in such antics in front of the pupils. They start out of their blissful slumbers at lunch-time, and leave promptly for their homes.

They enjoy the post-prandial siesta. Siesta over, they either browse through the newspapers or write personal letters. In the cool afternoon, they attend the school for a brief while, and engage the class at their sweet will and pleasure.

These Brahmin teachers make a total mess or mockery of teaching the Shudra pupils. I speak this out of personal experience.

They read their spurious religious tracts (Scriptures) before the gardeners and peasants at night, to improve their minds, but they succeed in impressing upon their (innocent) minds their own greatness (importance). They indulge in teaching them wrong things, and promptly receive from the ignorant folk wheat-flour and monetary gifts. The undeserving children take education (in their schools). Their diplomacy is a model (of perfect fraud) to all the world, and they exploit the Shudras un-ashamedly. The Shudra farmers pay the *local fund* (*cess*) to the Government for their children's education, but the Brahmin teachers fill up their own coffers and destroy the

illusion of the common people in the world. The Ati-Shudrās revere the Brahmins as Kings and earth-gods. You can imagine the plight, then, of the helots and thralls. Our English Government calls itself as enlightened and wise, but (how strange it is that) it hastens to appoint such hypocrites as teachers (in the schools). Is it ever possible for the tigers to provide flocks of sheep to the shepherds? Is it ever possible for the birds to fly in water? (No, never!)

Being repentant (or emancipated) by knowledge, the (so-called) enlightened frogs presume to teach the serpents. They (Brahmin teachers) pretend to be enlightened or emancipated to curry favour with the English rulers but continue to worship stone-images (of gods) in their worship-rooms at home.

(I exhort the English Government) to appoint teachers from other (non-Brahmin) communities, who would be models of wholesome (righteous) knowledge (enlightenment) in schools to teach the Shudrā children. They should preferably be selected from among the gardeners or peasants or the Ati-Shudrās (such as Māngs and Mahārs). Take this as the seed (quint-essence) of my experience. The tree (of knowledge) will, then, yield a rich harvest (of plentiful fruits), the Shudras' lot will be improved considerably, and thus the Brahmins, (the self-styled) earth-gods will be put to shame.

Joti pines in his heart because the Government does not pay any heed to the needs of the Shudrā children, while some Christian missonaries exert themselves (to improve the lot of the Shudrā children). Oh English rulers, you call yourselves as enlightened, liberal and benevolent (rulers), but (how strange it is that) the undeserving children take education in the schools (financed by the ' local fund ' paid by the Shudrās).

A Poem (' Akhand ') on Truth

Truth is the original home of us all. It is the foundation or corner-stone of all religions. All happiness in this world is the off-spring of (result of) the Eternal Truth. Truth is the foundation of all (human) happiness. All else is sheer darkness. Truth is very mighty as it destroy all sham, deceit or untruth. That which is rooted in Truth easily exposes or destroys hypocrites or selfish persons. Realising the might of Truth, the impostors (pretender) is mortified or anguished in his heart. An actor or pretender will never be happy as he tries (in vain) to supplant (oust) the God of Truth. Joti prays (humbly) to all persons not to give quarter to (shelter) deceit or hypocrisy in vain.

Advice to the Shudrās and Ati-Shudras (' Akhānd ')

A careful research into the Vedās will convince us that there were no discriminations and distinctions of high and low in the Iran (Persia) of the Aryans. The aborigines like the *Gonds* and the *Bhils* were the original masters (rulers) of this land (India), and the Iranians (Aryans) came to India at a later date (as invaders and interlopers). The Aryan Brahmins created a great confusion (upheaval, turmoil) in India, and (the original inhabitants of India) who were intensely patriotic, defended themselves (and their homeland) valiantly. The Aryan invaders (Brahmins) desecrated the sacred sacrifices here, robbed and oppressed the original inhabitants and stigmatised them as *'Dasyus'*. The Aryan Brahmins termed the natives as ' wicked ' and vicious'–clearly corrupted forms of ' *Dasyus* '. This corrupted form gained currency in their language. The word *'Dasyu* ' was corrupted into *'Dost'* or ' *Dushman*' by the Mohammedans in their own language (Arabic, Persian, or Urdu?). This is my inference. The Aryan Brahmins established their own supremacy and domination over the original inhabitants here by conquering them in wars. The war-like Kshatriyās were enslaved and were given the pejorative name of '*kshudra* ' (insignificant)– which later was corrupted into ' Shudra.' This corrupted form gained currency later on in the Aryan language. (The Aryan god) *Parashuram* used to hunt down the pregnant (Kshatriya) women and imprisoned them as hostages. When they delivered, Parashuram butchered their new-born babies in cold blood. Beloved of his father, he killed his own mother–*Renukadevi* (at his father's behest). How can he be (revered as) a god? The Aryan conquerors further humiliated them by giving them contemptuous names out of spite, such as ' demons ' 'evil spirits' and ' Maha-aris ' i.e. Mahārs i.e. ' great enemies ' The Aryans gave them food which was enough for bare sustenance and made them toil very hard. They robbed them of the fruits of their labour. They treated them as worse than cattle, surpassing, in this, even the Americans (in their ill-treatment of their slaves) in the whole world. The Aryans tortured and humiliated the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās in diverse ways and heaped ridicule upon them at all times. They never took pity on them (in any way) but continued to oppress them in all possible ways, and worst of all, they *forbade them to take education.* What had happened to their oft-vaunted virtues of compassion and forgiveness? Oh King Manu! Please declare your policy or intention (once for all). The *Sarvajanik Sabha* (the People's Organisation founded in Poona on Gudhi Padwa-1870) is taboo-ridden like a woman having her monthly course (when she is supposed to be ' untouchable ') but why is it antagonistic (inimical) to the Mahārs (untouchables) in its attitude? The (Indian)

National Congress is as helpless as the Indian widows, and is content to dance to the tune of the Bengali leaders (like W.C. Bonnerjee). The Māngs and Mahārs (the untouchables in India) are prohibited from learning Sanskrit 'Om namah' Salutation to the godhead), (So I would like to ask) 'For whom is the (Indian) Civil Service–'I.C.S'.–meant? The Brahmins avoid even the (polluting) shadow cast by the Mangs and Mahars. How can they, then, claim to have fraternal love (for them)? This (so-called) *Sarvajanik Sabha*' (the People's Organisation') presumes to tender advice to the English Government, but all its recondite (esoteric) Brahma-philosophy is absolutely useless. Its office-bearers put on airs like actors and succeed in enlisting the support of simple-minded (un-suspecting) Indian Princes. Presuming to be advocates, they try to act as (the people's) arbiters and at the same time, hoodwink Mr. Lee Warner. Mr. Gopal (Hari) Deshmukh (*alias* Lokahitawadi) has succinctly exposed the extremely un-ethical conduct (ways) of the Aryan worthies (the Brahmins). The (Indian) National Congress presumes to tender (un-warranted) advice to the English rulers, but it should try to follow the dictates of the Truth (in its dealings with the masses), if it intends to achieve a (lasting) unity (among the people). The (Indian) Civil Service has been (unjustly) monopolised by the Aryan Brahmins (here), and I beg to submit that it portends a great danger to the whole nation. I exhort my Shudra brethren most humbly (to realise) that these Aryan Brahmins (Officers in the Civil Service) are verily stony-hearted. Lee Warner is an (English) officer of honesty and rare integrity, and is a champion of the Shudrās and a (true) friend of the helpless. O learned Shudrās! When will you wake up from the slumber of ages and examine closely for yourselves the supreme confusion created here by the Aryan Brahmins? You will dance to the tune of (the wicked Aryans) like demented (ignorant) women, and in the bargain, your children will be completely exploited (beggared). The dead animals are also useful (to man) because our shoes are made from their hides, but when you die, (please remember that) you will only be the laughing stock and a source of botheration to all. (When you die) what account will you render unto the Omnipresent God? Then you will, indeed, be greatly confused (for an answer). "Fie upon him!"– will declare the people in one voice, after you die, and your women-folk will be ashamed to claim kinship with you in (public company). O Shudras! You are not beasts but are men, the pinnacle of God's creation, dowered with a radiant intellect (by God) which, alas! you have totally misused (widowed).

I really wonder how you (the Peshwäs) have come to style yourselves as "Shreemant" (and the "King of the ignorant fold" (the 'titles' that the Peshwas had gratuitously conferred on themselves, an insult to the people as such). My only regret is that you did not perish at your birth. Watch very carefully the great pains the English rulers have taken (in their administration here) and respect them thankfully. (O my ignorant people!) I beg of you most humbly not to be (shamelessly) ungrateful like the Pehswās (in Poona). Behave decorously, in consonance with the high privilege of being (rational) human beings, and educate all your children (girls as well as boys) who, hopefully, will become learned. If you study Sanskrit (the language of the gods) sedulously you will surely remember my (timely) advice to you. (The Brahmin scholars) did not allow you even to hear a single word of Sanskrit, and so hid the treasures of the Vedās and other esoteric 'Sanskrit works' from you. You should bring out in the open (thoroughly expose) the deep-laid villainy of the Aryan Brahmins, as this is a golden opportunity for you, *so declares Joti.*

A Paean (Song of Praise) for Eternal Truth
(A Halleluiah for Eternal Truth)

Victory, eternal Victory, to our Eternal Truth! Let us search for our Creator with the help of your strength (power). When the Aryan Brahmins were victorious they condemned and humiliated the Kshatriyās (the heroic original inhabitants of India). They further reduced them to the plight of non-entities by forbidding them any access to education (learning). The Aryan Brahmins treated the Kshatriyās as worse than beasts and compelled them to worship their feet, while claiming to be earth–gods themselves. Putting on the airs of tyrants and despots, they robbed the ignorant masses. They were never bothered (frightened) by the prickings of their conscience. The Brahmins enjoyed sumptuous feasts, and in this they surpassed (excelled) *Brahma the Demon* (*Brahma-Rakshas*). They (gladly) accept alms in the name of the deceased persons (from their relations), and shameless rascals that they are, enjoy those alms to their heart's content. It never occurred to them to allow the toiling Shudrā or the blind and the halt or the orphan to enjoy good food. The (powerful) Vedic lore (learning) is totally worsted at the sun-rise of Truth, and its hollowness (untruthful nature) is thoroughly exposed on a close scrutiny. When the (spurious) Scriptures hear (realise) the grandeur and nobility of the Eternal Truth, they are completely mortified as if their faces are plastered with black oily pigments. The heretics are completely worsted when they see your visage, O Truth, and hang down their heads in great shame. When you treat the ignorant Shudrās with due compassion and kindness, *O Truth!* the (so–called) earth–gods (the Brahmins) tremble with trepidation. O Truth! You are verily an ocean of compassion (for us the Shudrās) and you have emancipated us from the *trammels of Brahmin thraldom.* Through your blessed grace, we have understood (realised) the (right) path in life, and have begun to serve (diligently) our parents (or the ignorant Shudrās)?

Victory, eternal Victory, to our Eternal Truth!

(2) *Halleluiah for Eternal Truth.—*

Let us serve the King of Truth who is an embodiment of pure radiance and great integrity (rectitude). (Sāints and seers) search for it in the state of Eternal Bliss (Nirvāna). It attracts our minds to the first Cause (of Creation). This (Truth) has disappeared in the world. Nobody knows which is the *Summum bonum* (of life). The Aryan Brahmins have invented many (fictitious, spurious) religions, the better to serve their own interests. While searching for the Truth, I came to realise the

final (essential) Secret. I am fed up with the spurious religion, and hence have abjured mean (false) practices. I exhort all Shudrās to remember God (gratefully), to embrace the doctrine of *Truth*, to abjure the spurious religious practices and to treat all human beings with fraternal love. Do not spurn the poor and helpless persons by assuming overweening pride, and do not assume airs by being taboo-ridden. Overcome all evil, and serve (follow) King Bali (serve the tiller of the soil who is the authentic King). Maintain the members of your family by dint of (your) hard labour. *Always speak the Truth.* Abjure wicked religious dogma, and put the earth-gods (the Brahmins) to shame by educating the Shudrās (and Ati-Shudrās). Dedicate the service of the down-trodden to God. Vanquishing all spurious (heretic) religions, *Joti* bows down before God.

The Poems (Akhands) given at the end of the book-
" The Universal Religion of Truth "

An earnest request (prayer) by the author of this book to all men and women.

The Creator has created this earth (the Universe) which sustains (bears the weight of) us all. It is adorned with different kinds of grass (bushes) and trees. The trees bear many luscious fruits. These fruits and the kindly shade of the trees are meant for our comfort. Night and day the earth moves ceaselessly (on its axis) for our comforts, and (fondly) looks after us all. There should *not* be different religions for different human beings, as our Creator is one, *says Joti.*

(2)

The rains and rivers are created (provided) by our Creator for the convenience and comforts of animate and inanimate life (on this earth). The rivers flow rapidly and majestically and supply all beings with plentiful water. The human beings are able to sail in ships on the oceans for trade and commerce and are able to make themselves happy. How is it that there are different religions for different people? Why have you gone mad (lost your reason)? *asks Joti.*

(3)

The one and only Sun provides light (illumination) for us all and enables us to engage ourselves in different activities. The Sun endows all animate and inanimate existence with (vibrant) life and also sustains us all. He never discriminates among human beings, and like a kind father, makes us all quite happy and contented. There should be only *one religion* for all human beings and they should always follow the path of Truth, *says Joti.*

(4)

The one and only *Moon* traverses the sky ceaselessly, night and day, and delights the hearts of us all. The ebb and flow of the ocean (its low and high tides) are caused by her. She also governs the waves and the breakers of the saline ocean. The rain clouds convert the same saline water into sweet (potable) water which satisfies and delights all beings (by quenching their thirst). How is it that there are different religions for different people.? Why have you gone mad (lost your reason)? *asks Joti.*

(5)

(The Creator) has created the *wind* specially and hence all beings can breathe (inhale and exhale) freely. It nourishes and protects all beings as also Nature (plants and trees) in the world. It is the wind which keeps the atmosphere pure and makes all beings happy and contented always (by day and night). Let all human beings follow the Universal Religion of Truth and sing the praises of God, *says Joti.*

(6)

The Creator has endowed all beings with eyes (eye-sight) with which they are able to see one another. He has also equipped them with the rational faculty with which they can search for the (real) Truth, and lead the ignorant to the (right) path. The Creator has ordained *One Universal Religion of Truth* (for us all). What is the propriety of the people quarrelling (among themselves) on various counts? Let all human beings conduct themselves in awe and fear of the Creator, and thus lead happy lives, *says Joti.*

(7)

Let all men and women labour honestly, maintain all the members of their own families honourably and thus live in joy and contentment. You should send all your children (sons and daughters) to school, and feed (helpless) students gratis. You should practise the dictates of the *Sovereign Truth* in your daily lives, and treat the handicapped persons with consideration and compassion. By such conduct you will not only make others happy and contented, but you will yourselves also be happy and contented, *says Joti.*

(8)

He who is addicted to vices does not deserve to receive any alms (from others). A liar is (as bad as) but a drunkard, as he cannot control irrational (illogical) behaviour. All human beings are (dear to one another) as brothers and sisters, and you are greatest among them all. You should use, your intellectual capabilities to make one another (quite) happy and should take care of the helpless, *say Joti.*

(9)

The Creator of us all is the supreme Master of us all, and all human beings should hold Him in awe. All of us should enjoy (share) the property (good things of life) in an equitable manner, should live in peace and amity, and should never resort to quarrels. Human beings should not observe any distinctions or discriminations on the score of religion or administration (nationality) and should always behave truthfully, as desired by the *Creator* (as per the dictates of the Creator). I beg of you all to be happy and prosperous. This is my exhortation to all human beings, *says Joti.*

(10)

The operation (movement) of the Solar System (in space) is so wonderful that it defies human rationality or imagination (it is beyond them). So many other satellites gravitate around the Solar System. (The earth is) peopled by myriads of living organisations (beings). The Creator has created all human being, and He protects them as His children. *'Do unto others as you would be done by' and set everyone else at peace and harmony, says Joti.*

Hypocrisy of the Brahmins

The desires of the hypocritical Brahmins and the cunning exertions of the Bhat (priests) are actuated (by an intention to fleece the Shudras). They (unashamedly) say that God provides (the wherewithal) to them, and hence they presume to instruct the Shudras. They caricature God as a happy-go-lucky person, and deceive the Shudras in His name. Sloth (idleness) is man's enemy and hence *men should perform manual labour* (*for their livelihood*). The cunning Brahmin, on the other hand, desires to maintain himself by unethical means. He holds his nose with his hand (fingers) and recites the name of God ceaselessly (by himself) and expects the Shudras to toil in the fields and maintain (feed) the Brahmins (with the fruits of their labour). They enjoy sumptuous feasts and rest on soft beds (at night). They occupy many high (Government) posts only to exploit the Shudrās (in various ways). The Brahmins wish, in their heart of hearts, that only the Brahmins should be appointed as teachers (in the schools) so that they can criminally neglect their duty (of teaching) the Shudras who will, thus, remain ignorant. Some shrewd and cunning Brahmin politicans *pretend to serve the cause of India* (*as Indiand patriots*), *but are secretly nursing an ambition to be elected to the British*

Parliament, but they expect the Shudras to fight and perish on the battlefied. The Brahmins-the earth-gods-cherish a keen desire (hankering) to ride in the stately palanquins to be carried on the 'Shudrās' shoulders while alive, and they expect the same Shudrās to act as the pallbearers (when they die). The Brahmins hanker intensely to enter the (*Indian*) *Civil Service,* but pretend to criticise the British rulers in public meetings. They hurl vitrolic invectives against the English rulers, in choice English, while pretending to fight for the rights of the Indians. Joti (humbly) exhorts (the Shudras) to give up (exterminate) this Brahmin villainy (plot) root and branch, to earn their livelihood by honest labour and *worship at the shrine of the* (*Eternal*) *Truth in all humility.*

□ □

THE FLAME DIVINE

Hail Joti—Luther! seeker of the Holy Grail,
Knight-errant redressing 'Aryan' wrong,
Champion doughty of the under-dog,
Banishing Priest, Mammon, blazed glorious trail.

Soul prophetic, gardener grand,
Redeemer, healer of Shudra discord,
Idol-wrecker and 'tiller's whip-cord',
Beacon eternal, 'cross sea and land,

Foster-father to generations unborn,
Truth-seeker, magnanimous, free,
The toilers knit in camaraderie
'Sweetness and light', a radiant morn.

—'P. G. P.'

Poems condemning the Practice of Collecting the Local Fund (Cess) from the Shudras (1 to 11)

(1)

The children of the Brahmins succeed in completing their education. They behave in a deferential manner towards the English rulers. They capture the Officers' posts by showering fulsome praise on the whites (the English rulers), and exploit the Shudrās in all walks of life. The misguided Brahmin teachers teach wrong principles of logic and religion to the Shudrā children, as they (the teachers) hate (are jealous of) the English rulers. O Shudrās! You should first arouse (the conscience of) the English rulers as they are levying the *local fund* from you (compulsorily), *says Joti.*

(2)

The Shudrās pay the *local fund* (to the tune of one anna per rupee) along with the land (assessment) (every year) to the Government (for their children's education). But, unfortunately, the cunning Brahmins gobble it all up in the Education Department. Kindly show us how many Shudra children they have taught (in the schools) so far, and how many Shudrā officers they have trained so far. The white (English) Officers have solicitude for the Shudrās in their hearts, but unfortunately, they appoint the Brahmins to all responsible (important) posts. The generous Shudrās are now fed up with paying the *local fund* to the Government and also with maintaining the Brahmin (Officers) (out of the said fund), *says Joti.*

(3)

(The English Officers in the Education Department) should inspect all the primary schools in the villages, for the Brahmins have become overweeningly proud in all walks of life (in India). They should appoint such teachers as are imbued with an unquestioned humanitarian outlook, and they should also totally abjure the Brahmins' invidious practice of discriminating against the Shudrās. The type of education that the inveterately orthodox Brahmin teachers dole out to the Shudrā children inculcates, on their minds, the quintessence of a false religion. The doctrine of *Manu* (as enshrined in the *'Manu Smriti'*) is a veritable concoction of lies (falsehood). How long, O Lord, how long should the generous Shudrās continue to pay the *local fund* to the Government, only to fatten the Brahmins? *asks Joti.*

(4)

Let the young Shudrā boys take education (by attending the schools) and they should also (be ready to) serve as school teachers in the Education Department. No discrimination should be practised (against any type of students) in the schools. The teachers should teach all children (human beings) with impartiality and uniformity. The Shudrās should abjure the fad (the canker) of *caste distinctions* (communalism) totally, and they should further put the Aryan Brahmins to shame by doing meritorious deeds. The *local fund* is contributed by the Shudrās by the sweat of their brows to the Government, but the unscrupulous Aryan Brahmins gobble it all up, *says Joti.*

ABHANG

Oh Queen (Empress Victoria)! Your writ does not run in (our land of) India. (Your Government has gone to sleep in India). Please open your eyes and see (the ravages wrought everywhere by) the Brahmin officers (bureaucracy). The traditional Brahmin village—accountant (Kulkarni) wields a powerful pen (controls the records). The junior revenue officer (the Mahalkari) is a veritable lord in his sub-division. The Tehsildar awards harsh punishments to the Shudrās, and hence appears to be the god of death (Yama) to them. *The poor Collector is, indeed, helpless before the devilish machinations of his personal secretary.* The Revenue Department is predominantly manned by the Brahmin officers. Every Government Department is monopolised by the Brahmin bureaucrats and hence the poor, ignorant farmer does not get any justice (from them). Joti requests the Queen Empress to come to the rescue of the Shudrās (subjects) and emancipate them from the clutches of the wicked (Brahmin bureaucracy in India).

Abhangs about The Brahmin Priest-craft

Do not depend upon the Brahmin priests, O Shudrās! for they fleece you under the guise of (false) religion. Select referees (or arbiters)–both young and old–from among your own friends and castemen. Their age, experience, their fraternal feelings for you should be considered carefully by you while appointing them as the referees (marriage priests). The bride and bridegroom should first pray humbly to God and then garland each other. You should then (be able to) rejoice collectively. *There is no necessity or propriety of Brahmin priests (at your weddings) and you should drive them away (from the marriage pandals) says Joti.*

(5)

The Brahmins are generally found working as (primary) school teachers in almost all the village schools, but they inculcate sedition (treason) in the minds of the Shudrā children. They compel the Māng and Mahār(untouchable)pupils to sit segregated from the other (high-caste) pupils, and enjoy the benefits of the *local fund* (cess) undeservedly (without putting in any useful work). The Brahmin teachers skilfully hoodwink the white (English) officers (in the Education Depatrment) and persecute the Mahārs with the tenets of the concocted (spurious) religion. The untouchables contribute *'the local fund'* to the Government (the *'local fund'* should be expended for the good of the untouchables). Why should the Brahmins then, practise this fraud (on the untouchables)? *asks Joti.*

(6)

The (heartless) Brahmin teachers persecute the Shudrā children attending their schools, and ridicule them openly in the class-rooms (in the presence of the other pupils). The casteist (caste-conscious) Brahmins (teachers) openly flaunt and parade their caste–superiority, and (unashamedly) declare their caste-ascendancy. The Aryan Brahmins used to devour the flesh of horses and cows (beef) in the ancient sacrifices (that they then performed) whereas they content themselves with slaughtering the goats, in the English regime. They have the temenity to criticise the English rulers in a self-righteous manner (arrogantly), but at the same time sedulously fleece the Shudrās, *says Joti.*

(7)

The Brahmin examiners (or School Inspectors) practise blatant partiality and award more marks to the Brahmin pupils than what they really deserve (in the school examinations). They glower at the Shudra pupils and thus intimidate them in the examination. The Aryan Brahmins who (heartily) hate all others (Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās) in the world are really vermin (pusillanimous or mean-minded) of the first order, and lose no apportunity to insult and humiliate them at all times (all the while). The guileless, unsuspecting (holy) Englishmen pamper the Brahmins unnecessarily and allow them a free hand (to practise their knavery), *says Joti.*

(8)

Enlist all the Shudra children in the Govt. schools on a priority basis, and do not give quarter to the detestable Bhat (Brahmin) at any cost. Oh ye Shudrās! You should try to become teachers like the Brahmins, and surpass (excel) them

in practising the tenets of Truth. You should impart real knowledge to the Shudrā children (in the schools) and, then, indulge in tall talk (empty boast). You should try to exterminate the (hated) *doctrine of Manu,* root and branch. Instead of doing this (useful service), O Brahmins, you demand the payment of the '*local fund*' (from the Shudrās) and, thereby, mortify or put the Shudrās to great shame, *says Joti.*

(9)

Having taken education, you should travel from village to village, advising (enlightening) the Shudrās (to take education). *Demand of the Government to appoint Shudra teachers* (in the Schools) and tell the 'venerable' Aryan Brahmins to go begging (from door to door). Send all (your) Shudra boys and girls to school (without fail) so that they will become well-trained (competent persons of character) in all walks of life (for a variety of jobs). To what different parties (beneficiaries) should the Shudrās pay the *local fund*? And how long should they continue to maintain (feed) the cunning (Brahmins)? *asks Joti.*

(10)

Light (a thousand) lamps by opening plenty of Government Schools (for the Shudrā children) and illuminate the lives of the (teeming) Shudrās and allied persons (in this country). Without taking any aid in the form of the '*local fund*' from any one, demonstrate to the Shudrās what wonders you can work (for them). Instead of rendering such useful service to the populace, you continue to harass them (in diverse ways), and lay the blame (unjustly) at the unfortunate people's door. You should thank the English Govt. heartily for their kindness in having exiled (the disastrous tenets of) Manu (from this land), *says Joti.*

(11)

You should find out (ascertain) carefully the different ways in which the Aryan Brahmins persecute the Shudrās (in our country), and capture all positions of authority in all Departments. Expose the various tricks and frauds practised by the Aryan Brahmins (upon you so far) and highlight them to all the people, from time to time. Treat all the ignorant Shudrās and allied people in a just and righteous manner and thus convince them of the roguery of the Brahmins. Demonstrate to the wide world that you are the worthy descendants (scions) of the Shudrās, *says Joti.*

Poetic Selections

Human beings should never observe any distinctions based on religion or polity (political administration), but they should (rigorously) follow the path of Truth, for the (glory of) God. *All of us should embrace (clasp to our hearts) Christians, Mohammedans, Māngs and Brahmins as our own blood-brothers.* There is only one Universal Religion of Truth as ordained by our Creator. Why, then, do we indulge in quarrels for different religions?

The Shudrās Duped

The (Bhat) Kulkarnis instigate (incite) the (ignorant) Shudras in the villages to file suits in the Courts (to indulge in useless litigation). They advance loans to the Shudras to carry on the litigation, and receive bribes from one and all. The Brahmins denied education to the Shudrās (they kept them ignorant) and, thus, wreaked vengeance on them for all time. The Brahmins should beg pardon of the Shudras (apologise to the Shudras) and impart education to them promptly, *says Joti.*

No Spokesman Necessary

The villainous Brahmin keeps the Māng away from himself and draws water for himself from the well (reserved for himself). Even if the Māng dies of thirst the stony-hearted Brahmin does not relent at all. The Brahmins are misanthropes, swollen with pride, epitomes of all vices, and are mischief—mongers to boot. (Though they treat the Māngs as untouchables) they accept, with alacrity, the monetary alms from the said Māngs for having officiated at their weddings (from a safe distance). They enjoy this compulsory monetary gift (alms), though taboo-ridden, *says Joti.*

The Brahmins are the representatives (spokesmen) of the Hindu religion, and they have exploited all the ignorant people (Shudrās). These spokesmen have robbed the simple folk under the guise of religion and, thus, have feathered their own nests. *No spokesman, interceder, or intermediary is necessary in the divine court (before God), and pious devotion is truly authentic, says Joti.*

Of Truth

The Brahmins, being taboo-ridden. condemn the Mang (as untouchable) but in the same breath, attend dinner-parties with the English people at which they (Brahmins) eat flesh and imbibe wine. They receive illegal gratification (from the litigants) while dispensing justice (to them), and (shamelessly) uphold the unjust cause. They kiss the common concubines merrily, but the shameless fellows (that they are) condemn the Mahārs (as untouchables). (*The Shudrās*) *should designate the Aryan Brahmins as arch—haters of mankind, and hence they should be totally avoided* (*or rejected outright*) *says Joti.*

Bradlaugh

Oh Englishmen ! Do not keep quiet here now, but bring (Charles) Bradlaugh (a progressive, atheist Member of English Parliament) speedily to India. Catch him (Mr. Bradlaugh) by his ears and expose the wicked (teachings of the) *Vedās*, as also the way the Brahmins, intoxicated with power, persecute the Shudras (in India). He has no idea about the sad plight of the Shudras. The light of falsehood cannot shine (now). Preaching not based on (supported by) living experience is sheer prattle (garrullousness). Fie upon such (useless) learning! *says Joti.*

The Shudrās' Plight

The (Aryan) Brahmins were the authors of our Scriptures, and also the dispensers of justice (to us). They also were our preceptors in ancient times. Hence the pusillanimous (mean-spirited) Brahmins condemned us (the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās) to the meanest level and assumed greatness (superiority) for themselves. Which Brahmin should we revere (respect) and whom should we invite (to our homes) to perform religious rituals? O non-Brahmins ! Kindly reflect carefully and hold all human beings in great reverence. They are the inhabitants of (had their origins in) *Sahyadri-Khand,* and (their history) is described in my 'Akhands' (poems), *says Joti.*

The Indian National Congress

The Brahmins have founded the (Indian) National Congress (in 1885), and have enrolled some foolish Shudrās as its members. They exploit the simple (ignorant) Shudrās in India, and though they are sprung of the Brahmin stock, they eat refreshments in restaurants. The crafty and selfish Aryans criticise (censure) the whites (the Englishmen), and demand high positions (posts of authority) for themselves. The Bhat Officers amass wealth by unrighteous ways, and persecute the Shudras, *says Joti.*

An Apology Overdue

O Aryan Bhats! Please gird up your loins and beg pardon, on bended knees, of all the world. You forbade the Shudra vassals to take education, and regarded even the shadow cast by the Ati-Shudrās (the pariahs) as polluting. You should kiss (treat indulgently, kindly) the Shudrās (and Ati-Shudrās, the allied castes) and behave truthfully, honestly, with all human beings. Why have you become so ungrateful, O Brahmins, and why do you criticise the English people? *asks Joti.*

Local Fund

The poor Shudrā farmer toils on his farm and manages to maintain the members of his family and his oxen (with great difficulty). He pays the *local fund* along with the land assessment, to the Government, and supplements it with some corn. The English Government collects all the taxes, cesses, contributions, and opens (primary) schools only nominally (for the pupils). The Bhat (teachers) only dupe (deceive) the Shudrā children while they hoodwink the English Officers with cock-and-bull (stories), *says Joti.*

National Congress?

Let people of all the religions be represented in the (Indian) National Congress, and make the Aryan Brahmin stand at its bar (for judgement). Their ancestors composed the spurious and fictitious books, and the equally fanciful *Vedās* full of fictitious and cock-and-bull stories, out of sheer enmity (for the people). They persecuted the Shudras and the Mlenchhās (Moslems) to no end and they are the most cantankerous people among all mankind. Convert the Brahmin to the noble way of Truth and righteousness and make everyone happy and contented, *says Joti.*

Satisfaction

The Creator created all beings and provided them with the means (to make them happy) in all possible ways. He created different things (objects, conveniences), maintained and nourished all, and filled them (their hearts) with a great joy for eternity. Of all the beings He endowed man with intelligence (an intellect, a rational faculty), so that he should conduct himself in a truthful manner, as a sample or an illustration. We should nourish (feed) and maintain those who are tortured and afflicted as also the helpless (orphans), and should show a great loving concern for them as if they are our brothers. Always be mindful of his concerns and his doings (strivings) and cherish grateful feelings for him most sincerely. To trouble

others is a discreditable thing for man, and is a source of quarrels (strife) in this world. We should be ever grateful (to Him) and contented, for that is a sure sign of happiness and contentment, *says Joti.*

Where is Heaven?

(The Aryan Brahmins) have imagined, in their own minds, the eternal (every-lasting) peace of Heaven, with the help of a fertile imagination and facile guess-work, and have described it in their sacred books. "Where is Heaven"? Has anyone ever seen it for himself? Do not be afraid (or timorous) but show that Heaven to us. (Prove to us that it, indeed, exists). I address my question to you, O quack or faith-healer (or witch-doctor). Do not indulge in fruitless arguments or subtle sophistry, dear Brahmin elder brother. Search high and low, and you will realise that *a liar will enver be happy and contented, says Joti.*

Socrates

He (Socrates) was ever (eternally) happy and contented and was adorned in equanimity and a balanced mind. [The line 'They encounter difficulties immediately' may perhaps, have been transposed from the previous 'Akhand'. I have preferred to take a portion of the last line (in the last 'Akhand') Translator] Taking his stand on the bed-rock of Truth, and holding fast to it in his mind, he spends himself in the service of the poor, the helpless and the wretched (The Sophists of Greece, in the 5th century B.C. made the good and great Socrates drink poison (hemlock), and thus, persecuted and killed him, out of sheer spite and hatred (for him). If you read the relevant books (about this sorry spectacle) you will realise that Socrates never lost the equanimity of his mind (spirit) (even when face to face with death), *says Joti.*

Sympathetic Understanding

'All men are created equal' by the Creator, and no one is inferior to any one else. He has bestowed intelligence (intellect, rational faculty) in a varying measure (less or more) on all, but has not bestowed it on selected (chosen) individuals hereditarily. The Shudrās and allied classes are in no way inferior, and they have got the same physical features (limbs etc) as the Aryans. Why have the Shudrās forgotten their precious human rights, and why have they become the Ati-Shudrās (the pariahs) like the beasts (of the field)? How and when did the Shudrās become the vassals of the Aryans? How and when did the others become the thralls or helots (of the Aryans)? If we peruse and examine closely the spurious books written by the Aryans, we shall find that the *rapacity or greed of the Aryans was the root-cause*

of the original conflict between the Aryans and the Shudrās. Man should not discriminate against any other human being on the ground of religion, and all should live in harmony and unison in this world. I wrote the book, *'The Universal Religion of Truth'* but was short of funds to print (and publish) it.

Altruism

O you Shudras! abjure drink for a few days and utilise the money thus saved to buy (useful) books. Look within your hearts (practise introspection while studying) the said books, and do not harbour enmity in your hearts (for your fellow-men). The spurious religion (preached and practised by the Aryan Brahmins) has not got the foundation of Truth, and the airs it assumes (and the superiority it claims) are a sheer exercise in futility, actuated by base selfish considerations. The Aryans forsake truth and true religion, practise religiosity and indulge in blood-shed (blood-letting) in 'wars of religion'. They presume to set a bad exempt of religious conflicts to the holy Saints, and harass the unfortunate people in the world (the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās) *hereditarily* (discrimination practised on the basis of heredity). There cannot be real satisfaction (happiness) without altruism or sympathetic understanding. Everything else is an impediment to unity, *says Joti.*

The Craftiness of the Aryan Bhats

There is only one authentic Creator, and all human beings are one. *Sovereign Truth is His royal insignia.* He has created all mankind. All human beings are His children whom He protects (lovingly). *'Do unto others as you would be done by!'* and (you) should please and satisfy all in your dealings in your life (in the world). We shall have to bear the consequences of our conduct towards other human beings, *says Joti.*

Altruism

The Bhatjis came to India (*the Land of Bali*) from Iran, and conquered the Kshatriyās (the warrior-class) here, out of greed. You will find chapter and verse for this in the *Vedās*, that the Aryans (Brahmins) took to arms (fought as soldiers in the army). They treated the conquered (Kshatriyās) as un-touchables, and shunned even their shadow (as pollution), out of sheer hatred (for them). They forbade them to take education and thus kept them ignorant. The free-booters robbed and impoverished the inhabitants of India and styled themselves as the new lords and masters. The Māngs and Mahārs were imbued with the spirit of true altruism, while the Aryan (Brahmins) were exposed and discomfited, *says Joti.*

Courage or Patience

A truly ethical person possesses a deep, abiding love for Truth, a pure mind and a tranquil heart, and courage Fortitude is ever wide-awake in his heart. Utilise all these precious assets in your truthful or moral conduct (in your daily life). Such an ideal person bears the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune 'heroically, overcomes all calamities, and gives a helping hand to those who are oppressed and afflicted (with misfortunes) in this world. Steadfast in courage, they make all others happy and their lives are crowned with glorious success, *says Joti.*

The Shudrās Exploited

When the Shudrās in India lost courage and self-confidence, the Aryan Brahmins turned them into vassals, became imperious and wallowed in (shameless) luxuries. The timid, deluded and ignorant Shudrās prostrated themselves at the Aryans' feet and thereby lost all their dignity and self-respect. Being ignorant (misguided) they fought with the Muslims and perished (in the battle) being egged on by the Aryans. The Aryan Brahmins exploited and despoiled the brave Māngs and Mahārs here, and degraded them to the level of beasts, *Says Joti.*

The Blessed one

He who has a pure heart, who relies totally on God, whose conduct is truthful in life (the world), who has banished petty religious and communal considerations from his mind–*such a one is a truly happy person* (*in this world*) *and he is truly blessed.* The Aryan (Brahmin) has no courage to describe Truth (in all its majesty), and he is, indeed, calculating, thoughtless (foolish), and treacherous. Manu does not show (explain) the untrue (spurious) *Vedās* to the Ati-Shudrās (pariahs) and refuses to exhibit them in the broad daylight (for all to see), *says Joti.*

Ethics

True morality or ethics is the life-breath of the Universal Religion of Man. All others are negations of Religion, says Joti.

True ethics is the hall-mark of the Universal Religion of Man, and it alone is truly life-giving, says Joti.

The Universal Religion of Man is founded on Truth and Ethics, and everything else is unethical, says Joti.

Self-Introspection

The Aryan Brahmins fabricated some (religious) books relying on their queer logic, and were not afraid of even God (defied God Himself) for petty selfish considerations. They used to recite these (spurious) books in the houses of the Shudrās and deceived them under the guise of religion. They never did a spot of useful work but duped all (the ignorant ones) and claimed (styled) themselves as the earth-gods. They forfeited self-introspection and, in the process, became the practitioners of mere religiosity, *says Joti.*

Self-Introspection

If you try to find a mark of identification between the Mang and the Aryan (Brahmin), you will perceive that both of them possess the *self-same Soul.* They are identical in most things—in their food and drink and are actuated by the same desires and impulses. The Māng and the Aryan Brahmin both of them–are truly an adornment, a distinction among men, and both are identical in their behaviour. *Self-knowledge is the crown and summit of all Knowledge* and *nobody is an outcast* (*fallen from grace*) *says Joti.*

Self-Introspection

When all the prople will come to know their human rights who will be the protector of the Aryan Bhats? The Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās will surely ask, ' How is it that all of us are condemned to a mean, despicable level while the Aryan Brahmins are elevated to a high station in the land of Bali (India)? The venomous (viper-like *Vedās* sting (bite) the ignorant folks here, and (having stung them) bide themselves in holes in the earth (like the serpents). If you quarrel with one another, all of you stand to lose (will come to harm or grief), and hence you should get rid of all the heretic practices. O Aryans, try to avoid the impending disaster, and embrace the Shudrās and allied classes as brothers. This is an opportune time to practise some self-introspection and to remember our Creator, *says Joti.*

The Enlightened People

He who is a *Votary of Truth* does not fear the Past or the Present or the Future (for any reason). He conducts himself in a truthful (righteous) manner at all times, and tries to make others happy in all his dealings with them. When he is no more, his children continue to be happy (like himself), and all the people (who had dealings with him) remember him with joy (and gratitude). Such a person should be called the ' *enlightened one*' or a ' *great man* ' (a magnanimous man), for he is an adornment to mankind, *says Joti.*

Equality of all men and women

All those who are of truthful conduct are always happy, whereas (the crafty) Aryans (Brahmins) pine inwardly (in their hearts). The Brahmins shun hard manual labour instinctively, and look at the (hard-working) Shudras in a bemused and confused manner. They can not give up their original nature of brothers. Devoid of a balanced wisdom, the (venerable?) Brahmins are truly stony-hearted, and following their advice is like sowing the seed of dissension, *says Joti.*

True Religion

Human beings forget the dictates of a balanced wisdom and propagate many (spurious) religions in their homes. If we search (diligently) we shall find that there are so many 'religions' in this world. *Which religion, then, is the true religion* of *all human beings*? Everyone claims that his religion alone is the true (chosen) religion, and hence he is swollen with false pride in the world. *Joti says* that he is really confused as to which religion should be encouraged in the world and which one should be followed in one's day-to-day life.

Balanced Wisdom

There are so many different religions holding sway in the world, and (their adherents) fight among themselves like he-buffaloes. Those who try to control (trap) the he-buffaloes are crushed to death, and (gullible) people declare that all of them are happy in Heaven. Some one says that all those who have perished in this (foolish) way have become ' martyrs' (in the cause of religion), whereas another avers, equally confidently, that they have gone to Heaven. For want of a balanced wisdom, all the people are truly confused and are responsible for a lot of blood-shed, *says Joti.*

Robbing and despoiling (the Shudrās), the Brahmins always resort to stratagems and trickery (treachery) in all their dealings. Compel such idle Brahmins to put in hard manual labour, and destroy (uproot) them as (poisonous) thorns, *syas Joti.*

A Balanced Temperament

(2)

The really thoughtful (discerning) person does not indulge in ceaseless recitations and sanctimonious ablutions. Offering these to the Creator is, indeed, an empty (useless) exercise. The really thoughtful (discerning) person never persecutes the helpless widows and does not have their heads shaved by the barbers. Such a discerning person never worships metal or stone images and never condemns the Shudrās as mean and wretched. He whose actions (strivings) are not actuated by a balanced temperament should certainly be dubbed as a heretic, *says Joti.*

(3)

The crafty (cunning) Brahmin says that killing of animals (animal sacrifices) is the essence of the Vedantic philosophy and that cow-slaughter is truly meritorious. The unjust dictates or fiats of *Manu* are the standing testimony of *Manu* for the (unfortunate) Shudrās and allied classes, and hence, the Brahmins are enjoying themselves heartily in this land of Balirājā (India). Condemn (the doctrine of) Manu and consign him (and his doctrine) to the scrap-heap, and treat the Shudrās and others as your own blood—brothers.

He who never treats his fellow human beings unjustly, who regards all as his brothers and sisters (kith and kin), who never indulges in the pastime of vilifying the Mahārs and Māngs (untouchables), and who consigns the spurious Scriptures of the Aryan Brahmins to the flames he and who never persecutes others, out of arrogance born of his affluence, and who abjures all hatred from his heart-such a person alone deserves to be called *as the follower of the Truth. Joti is the true brother of all human beings.*

King Bali

He was an incomparably heroic King of our country. He was an intrepid hero in war. So let us all remember him (gratefully). Many brave heroes like *Bhairoba, Khandoba, Jotiba* and *Maha-Subhā* (*Mhasobā*) have adorned (the history of) this land of King Bali. King Bali, the original King of this land, was an embodiment of all virtues, and hence (his subjects) remember him gratefully on the occasion of Dassera and Diwali (even to-day). That is exactly why the Kshatriya ladies pray fervently (at these festivals), "Let all evil flee far from hence, and let Bali's Kingdon come)!" The Aryan Brahmins came here from Iran ,conquered and enslaved the Kshatriyās here, robbed them of all their gold as also of their ancestral wealth. *The gardener Joti* puts a pointed question to the Bhats (Brahmins)–'Why did Waman condemn (and exile) King Bali to the nether world!'

The poor children should take education (at all costs), and they should beg for their food–enough for the day (for their need). The learned elders should impart education (to the needy, poor pupils), and they should not mind begging in the village for this (noble) purpose. (Such philanthropic persons) should open schools for men and women, and should impart instruction to them without making any distinctions. Those who spend money on their own personal needs will surely never prosper, *says Joti.*

The Aryan Brahmins revere Parashurām as a veritable god,– Parashurām who has massacred the innocent babes of the Kshatriyās. The hypocritical Peshwā fights with the Mohammedan armies on the battlefield of Panipat, but is totally defeated by the foreigners. Bajirao the poltroon was mortally afraid of the English, and was condemned to give gifts of cows (to mendicants) at Bithoor (in U.P.) The cunning Brahmin Nānā (Peshwā) flaunts his taboos and orthodoxy, but shares food with the English officers at their tables, *says Joti.*

You should rank an empty-minded retailer of the Vedic lore with the birds and beasts who are not endowed with any intelligence (rational faculty). *You should embrace a Christian, a Mohammedan, a Mang and a Brahmin as your brothers.* All human beings are as dear as blood-brothers and all of you have a close affinity with them. Use your intellectual powers for your own happiness as also for the happiness of your fellow-men, and you should (always) maintain (help) the destitute and the helpless, *says Joti.*

When the Creator has laid down (enunciated) one Religion for mankind why this useless sophistry ? asks Joti.

Truth is the only authentic Religion in this world, and broadcast this universal doctrine (to all the world), says Joti.

A Saintly Lady

All human beings for her are as her own brothers and sisters, and she never dreams of displeasing the Ati–Shudrās (the Māngs and Mahārs) (The word 'करीताती' seems to be a misprint for 'करीनाती') She tries to propitiate Christ and Muhammad with her truthful conduct, and leads (the thoughts of) all human beings unto the Creator. She does not observe any distinctions based on religion or nation or caste and she deserves to be designated as our true (authentic) Mother. We should call such a woman as a *'saintly lady'*, and should sing her paeans eternally, *says Joti.*

Truthful Conduct

Truthful conduct is the essence of the true religion of mankind and the (so-called learned) Brahmin does not know this secret. Laxmi, the goddess of wealth, massages the feet of the hard-working Shudrās, and she never spurns them as (mean) Kunbis (cultivators). Human beings will surely be happy if they try to please one another through love and charity. Then all evils will flee from them helter-skelter. A hard-working person is the true brother (helper) of a Shudra, and you should always try to benefit him, *says Joti.*

A Noble Person

He to whom Truth has revealed itself will never (even dream) to trouble (persecute) any other person in the least. He will never profess himself as a Brahmin falsely in thought, word and deed(?), and will never try to flaunt his superiority over the Shudras and allied persons. He does not show off his high birth (social rank) and does not practise his hypocrisy on any one. We should regard such a person as one who appreciates the merits of others, and should always associate with him, *says Joti.*

The Spurious *Vedas*

The Aryan Brahmin does not know the origin (secret, heart and soul) of the Creator who is compassion incarnate, and hence dubs the Shudrās as the children (progeny) of the slaves. The (heartless) Brahmin persecutes (harasses) the Māngs and the Mahārs and deludes them with the heretical (and spurious) Scriptures i.e., the *Smritis.* The four *Vedās* of (venerated by) the Aryan Brahmins are full of mischiveous and pernicious doctrines, and (when confronted with rational arguments) flee helter-skelter (in all directions). The Bhat (the Brahmin) is the root-cause of the persecution (of the Shudras), and he has been put on an unassailable pedestal, *says Joti.*

Protector of Truth

He who abjures anger and who is a follower of the Religion of Truth is truly powerful among all human beings. He has compassion for all beings, is of a tender heart, and strictly controls all his sense-organs. He conducts himself as a virtuous and moderate person in the world, and all his desires are pure (free from impurity). Having found the real Truth for himself, he condemns all impious and hypocritical practices. Such a person alone is a protector of the Truth, *says Joti.*

The Wily Brahmin

The Aryan Brahmin does not possess true self-knowledge, and hence he persecuted his fellow human beings in all possible ways. Bereft of forgiveness and compassion, he is swollen with over-weening pride. He has become a mendicant and thus troubles everyone in the world. He looks down upon the Ati-Shudra as insignificant and assumes airs unnecessarily as a (wily) fox. He slaughters the dumb cows under the pretext of the religions observance of the death anniversary (of the ancestor) and performs the necessary religious rites (on that occasion), *says Joti.*

A Time-Server

He treats the fault-finder with deference, and behaves ideally towards him. He cringes before the angry one, but flaunts his taboo-ridden conduct before the ignorant ones. Such Brahmins are a veritable blot on the fair name of decent humanity (human beings), *says Joti.*

The Proud Brahmin

The proud Brahmin persecutes the ignorant Shudrā, but at the same time, he is mortally afraid of the Englishman. He parades his bookish learning before the untouchables (pariahs) but shares the food with the foreigner greedily like a vulture. He slaughters cows and horses with impunity in his (religious) sacrifices, but traduces the Mahār out of spite (jealousy). O Brahmins, why do you behave like villains and persecute your fellow human beings (the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās)? *asks Joti.*

The Greedy Bhat

Without searching for the true Creator, (the Brahmins) have invented many figments of their imagination (fables), and incorporated them into their (spurious) books. They have usurped His position styling themselves as earth-gods, and deceive the Shudrās very cunningly. They fleece the son of a deceased Shudra systematically all the time, and extract a pair of shoes as a gift from him (while performing the obsequial rites of his father). You should always regard the Aryan Brahmin as a veritable curse (calamity), and should expose him in his true colours, *says Joti.*

The Magnanimous Person

He who has developed an aptitude to follow the path of Truth is, indeed, an adornment to humanity, and is also truly happy. His earnest desire is that all (human beings) should be happy. He is avid for virtue and is truly enlightened (learned). He unerringly identifies the source of the joys and sorrows of others, and conducts himself towards them in a befitting manner. He alone is truly blessed! You should call such a person as truly virtuous and should claim him as your own brother, *says Joti.*

A True Brahmin

If a Brahmin comes to be a Brahmin by realising the true nature of Brahma, then how is it that the others are dubbed as Shudrās (that the others come to be regarded as Shudrās?) The Brahmins forbid inter-dining and inter-marriage with the other sections of society, and are intoxicated with false notions of superiority, like serpents. They look down upon the Christians and Mohammedans as mean and persecute (the Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās) as beasts of the field. A true knowledge of Brahma is a sure sign (mark) of a true Brahmin, whereas all others are vice incarnate, *says Joti.*

The Taboo-ridden Brahmin

The religion that a Brahmin follows is like (the way of life of) a Jain monk or a Marwāri (a money-lender). When there is a death in the family, the Brahmin distributes corn and sweet-meats (as gifts to others). Being taboo-ridden he does not touch others (for fear of pollution), nor does he share food and drink with others openly. He does not inter-marry with the Shudrās nor does he give even the left-overs of his meals to the untouchables (pariahs). The Aryan Brahmin is no credit to humanity (humankind), and refuses to follow the righteous path, *says Joti.*

The Spurious Scriptures

(The Brahmins) have carved out the imaginary images of God (in stone) abundantly, and have composed many spurious (false) scriptures to serve their own interests. Their scriptures abound in (imaginary superhuman beings such as) Kinnarās and Gandharvās, and they have systematically deceived the ignorant folks with their fraudulent practices. Being shamelessly taboo-ridden is the foundation of their religiosity, and they practise their frauds on the Shudrās and allied classes. Having become congenitally shameless, the Brahmins have systematically defrauded and exploited the Shudrās, *says Joti.*

Summum Bonum of Life

(O Brahmin), God (the Creator) has not created all this Universe only for yourself, and (hence) do not arrogate to yourself a pre-eminent position among all the human beings. (The Creator) has endowed you with a body and a discriminating intellect–which special gifts mark you out from all other human beings. You should always spend your energies for the welfare and happiness of the whole mankind, and should sacrifise your life for the furtherance of Truth. By such behaviour, you will achieve the 'Summum bonum' of life, and the Creator Himself will be deeply pleased, *says Joti.*

An Ideal Gentleman

He who is truthful, courageous, compassionate, austere (serious), who follows the Truth and (hence) is valiant, and who is truly honourable. He has absolute self-control over all his sense-organs, who is an adornment to mankind, and who is eminently virtuous in all his dealings. He identifies himself with others in their joys and sorrows, and behaves with everyone with equanimity (equity) and affection. Such a person alone deserves to be called a true gentleman (a man of honour) and *Jotiba fondly caresses him.*

Self-introspection and Self-control

O Ye Aryan (Brahmins) who have fallen from grace (who have gone astray), why don't you take to the path of virtue? Why don't you set an example to all the foreigners in the world? Enough of your pretence of being the earth-gods. He who behaves as a cunning impostor is universally ridiculed by everyone. (They exclaim 'Fie upon him!'). Surrender yourselves to the so-called Shudrās and Ati-Shudrās, and beg pardon of them publicly. There is no other go (alternative) for you now. You should practise (fierce) self-introspection and control your jealousy (of others), *says Joti.*

Follow the Truth

If you yearn for happiness (in life), then take your firm stand on the Truth (*always follow the Truth*). Propitiate the Truth and act courageously, and make all the people in the world quite happy and contented. Only then you will be the picture (embodiment) of true happiness, you will be a victor in the race of life, and you will also enable others to be such victors. Deep self-introspection is the true (authentic) knowledge (wisdom), and is an unerring sign (indication) of an enlightened intellect (intellignece), *says Joti.*

Telling lies (shamelessly), torturing the ignorant folks, to defraud (rob) one's own brother for one's gain, and to practise deceits treacherously on one's dear friends–these surely are not the hall-marks (signs) of true gentlemen (honourable persons). If you adopt the profession of a seller of drinks (wines), you run the risk of making your children as veritable drunkards. *True ethical conduct is the (ideal) religion of man. Everying else is unethical, says Joti.*

True Ethical Conduct

A truly honest person reflects his integrity in his dealings with his fellow-men. Maintain your fellow-men in a spirit of true gratitude. The Creator Himself will stand solidly by you. Always practise humility and courtesy in your dealings and be industrious day and night. *True ethical conduct is the (ideal) religion of man and all else is mischief (transgression), says Joti.*

Moksha (Salvation)

Moksha (Salvation) works as a lackey at the mansion of Truth, and true religious piety also salutes it (the Truth), says Joti.

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" For want of education, intellect was lost; for want of intellect, morality was lost; for want of morality, dynamism was lost; for want of dynamism, wealth was lost; for want of wealth the Shudrās were degraded (demoralised)—want of education (being uneducated) has caused all these disasters ! "
—' *The Cultivators' Whipcord* '

" All the Sacred Books (Scriptures) compiled by different holy persons do contain some element of Truth, as per their own perceptions and in consonance with the spirit of their times. *In that (ideal) family, the lady (of the house) may, if she likes, embrace Buddhism after studying the Buddhist religious scripture; her husband may embrace Christianity, if he likes (if he so chooses) after studying the Old and the New Testaments (of the Bible); their daughter may embrace Islam if she so chooses after studying the Quran; and their son may embrace the Universal Religion of Truth, if he so chooses, after studying the ' Universal Religion of Truth ' (by Mahatma Phule—1891). And all these members of the family (the parents, the son and the daughter) should lead peaceful lives, should never envy or hate the other person's religion, and all of them should behave towards one another in a spirit of love and understanding. " The Universal Religion of Truth "—Chapter 19.*

" Please note that there are some people who do not think dispassionately about the problem of the Human Rights of all human beings and who are unwilling to grant them those rights openly and voluntarily,..... (Please note that) the Societies established by us and the books published by us are diametrically opposed to the Societies founded by the above-mentioned (retrograde) people and to the contents of the books published by them. They have designedly and wickedly suppressed (omitted) from their spurious sacred books the shameful episode (event) of how their ancestors subjected us (the Shudrās and Atishudrās) and converted us into serfs, to wreak their vengeance on us (vindictively). Their ancient and mischievous scriptures will bear ample testimony to this our charge. The Brahmin authors who are hopelessly out of touch with the grim reality on the ground (who dwell in ivory towers, who are visionaries, who are just wiseacres), and the Brahmin orators who wax eloquent at their coteries and public meetings, are surely ignorant of the harrowing hardships which the Shudrās and Atishudrās have had to undergo all these years. The Founder of the ' *Sārvajanik Sabhā* ' ('Public Social Organisation ' founded in Poona in 1870) knows all about this sorry state of affairs."—*A Letter to the Marathi Literary Conference.*

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